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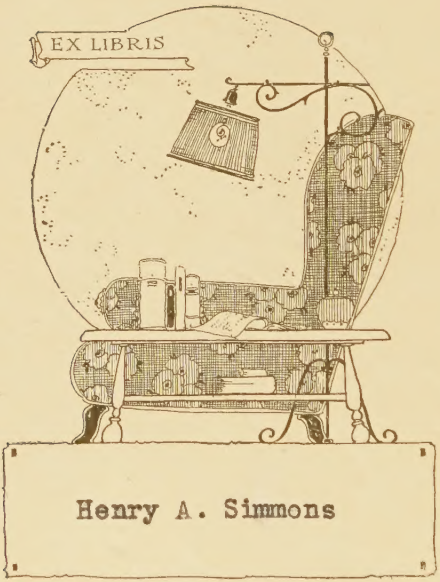

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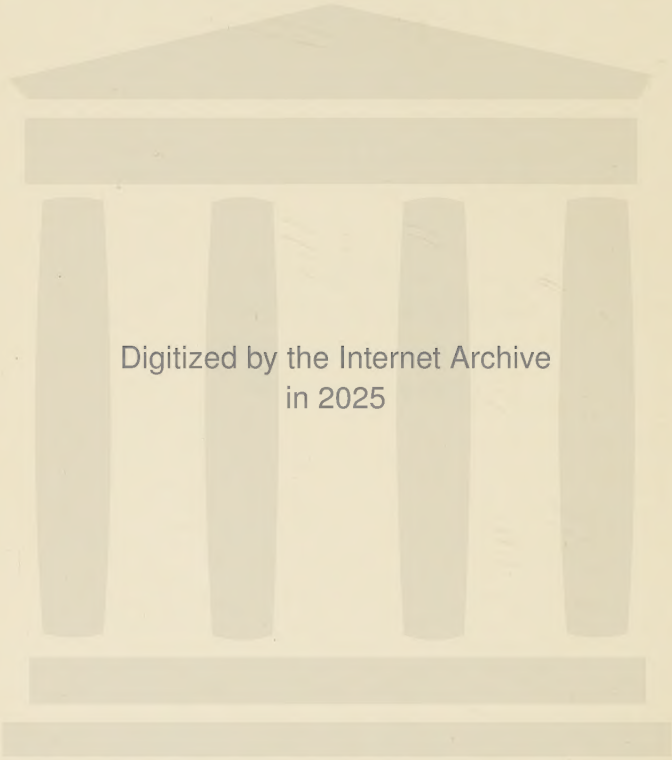
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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	Foreword	9
I.	The Apostle	17
II.	The Epistles	67
III.	The First Epistle to the Thessalonians	137
IV.	The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians	165
V.	The First Epistle to the Corinthians	187
VI.	The Second Epistle to the Corinthians	227
VII.	The Epistle to the Galatians	269
VIII.	The Epistle to the Romans	299
IX.	The Epistle to Philemon	329
X.	The Epistle to the Colossians	349
XI.	The Epistle to the Ephesians	379
XII.	The Epistle to the Philippians	407
XIII.	The Pastoral Epistles	447
XIV.	A Closing Word	483
	Bibliography	489
	Indexes	501

FOREWORD

We have called this book Paul *and* His Epistles, but it might be Paul *in* His Epistles just as well, for the book aims to be not only an Introduction to the Pauline Epistles but also a Study of the Personality of the Apostle Paul as revealed in them. They are fragments of his life. They are all autobiographical in character. They ought not to be read as treatises in theology, for none of them was intended to be merely theological. They ought to be recognized as the products of personal experience. They ought not to be presented dry as dust and dead as a doornail. They are full of vitality. They were written to meet the real needs of real people, and they were written by a man who wore his heart on his sleeve and who never dictated a letter without putting himself wholly and unreservedly into it. We shall endeavor to make this apostle and the peoples to whom he ministered in these epistles live again in these pages, being assured that if we succeed in any measure, we only shall bring to light the life and immortality which has belonged to them by right from the beginning.

We have read many works on Introduction whose principal business seemed to be that of dissection. They began with the treatment of the subject as though it were a corpse stretched at full length upon the laboratory table, and as they proceeded they gave the impression that the whole thing was becoming seven times as dead as before. They may have given a deal of information concerning the material composition of the works they discussed; they may have been full of the mint, anise, and cummin of the minute investigation of minor details, but there were weightier matters of which they seemed to have no appreciation and

which, therefore, utterly escaped their observation and study. They were long on the letter, but very short on the spirit in their criticism. We hope within due limits to reverse this procedure. We will be looking always for life rather than death, for genuineness rather than falsity, for the compelling truth rather than ingenious but tenuous theory. By the use of the historical imagination we shall endeavor to reconstruct the living past, but we shall follow only where accurate and reliable scholarship seems to point the way.

No effort at the popular presentation of these themes will be allowed to excuse any carelessness in the presentation of facts. We shall attempt to be trustworthy at every point. Where the great authorities differ we shall weigh their arguments and come to our own conclusions. As a matter of course the result will not be pleasing to all, but we shall have a consistent picture of the great missionary apostle and some clear conception of the products of his pen. We never have been able to see why work of this sort should be deadly dull. It ought to be interesting as well as instructive. If it catches any of the inspiration in its originals, it will be radio-active, energizing because so energetic, life-giving because so throbbing with life. Both Paul and his epistles are dynamos of spiritual vitality. If we can make that apparent while presenting the authentic facts concerning them, we shall feel that the more important part of our task has been accomplished. There are dead issues in these epistles, to be sure, but every epistle has in it words of eternal life. They have given life to multitudes in the past. Sometimes the most unlikely passages in them have proven themselves capable of effecting extraordinary transformations of character, as in the case of Augustine.

Augustine was a genius without a rival in his generation, but he was a libertine as well. When he came under conviction that he ought to be a Christian he prayed in his wretchedness, "Grant me chastity and continency—*but not*

yet." He realized his own insincerity and his cowardice, for he was afraid that God would answer that prayer too soon and he might be deprived of the enjoyment of his concupiscence. Lust and custom and necessity had bound him in chains too heavy for his vacillating will to break, and he writhed under an agony of humiliation in the recognition of his hopeless slavery. One day in utter shame and misery he went with his friend Alypius into the garden behind their lodging in Milan. There a mighty storm swept over Augustine's soul, and it was accompanied with as mighty a shower of tears. He stole away from his friend into the farther recesses of the garden, where his emotion might be unseen by any but his God. Then the Lord spoke to him through an audible voice, as of a boy or girl chanting and oft repeating the words, "Take and read; take and read; take and read."

Augustine interpreted the message as a direct command of God for him to take up and read "the volume of the apostles" which he had left lying in the grass by his friend's side, and he went back to Alypius and picked up the book and opened it at random, and his eyes fell first on the verses from the Epistle to the Romans which read, "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." [1] He read no more, for as by a sudden flash of lightning the darkness of his doubt had disappeared and his weakness had been transformed into strength. The peace and joy of God's salvation filled his heart and a power divine gave him victory henceforth over every evil thing. He was converted! In the reading of that single sentence from one of the epistles of Paul he found himself suddenly, miraculously transformed from a sensualist into a saint.[2]

[1] Rom. 13. 13, 14.

[2] Augustine's account of his conversion is found in the Confessions, book viii, chaps. 8–12.

There was such marvelous virtue in the words of the apostle centuries after his death. There are such unrealized possibilities in them still.

Augustine has been the most influential theologian in the Christian Church since the apostolic times. The greatest reformer in the church was Martin Luther, who was an Augustinian monk at the time of his conversion. Like his master Augustine, he was brought to the crisis in his spiritual life by a word from the apostle Paul. He was sent to the city of Rome on some business of his Order. There as a devout Roman Catholic he slowly and painfully was climbing up the Scala Santa on his knees in the fashion followed by the pilgrims of that day, for that old mediæval staircase was said to be the veritable flight of stone steps leading into Pilate's house in Jerusalem and therefore to have been pressed by the Saviour's feet. The staircase itself was a hoax, and the performance upon it was a hollow mockery of true devotion. Half-way up that staircase the sentence which Paul makes a text for his discussion in both the Epistle to the Galatians and the Epistle to the Romans flashed into the mind of Martin Luther—"The just shall live by faith," [3] and not by mummeries like these. That was the message, and that was sufficient.[4]

Martin Luther rose to his feet and walked down that staircase and away from that scene of superstitious and foolish performance and penance; and if there is any one moment in the life of Martin Luther in which the great Reformation may be said to have come to its birth, it was that moment of protest and revolt when Paul's quotation from the ancient prophet showed Luther in instant and convincing illumination the supremacy of the spiritual over any performance of ritual and the right of the individual conscience over against any prescription of ecclesiastical authority. When Luther rose to his feet that act was symbolical of a new era

[3] Gal. 3. 11; Rom. 1. 17.

[4] Lindsay, History of the Reformation in Germany, p. 207.

in the history of the church. It marked the end of the cringing submission demanded by Roman Catholicism and the beginning of a more manly independence for the Protestant world.

Since the Reformation there is only one man who may be compared with Luther as the leader of a great onward movement in the Christian world. John Wesley is the great evangelist of the Protestant Church. He was a preacher's son, and he was a preacher by profession. He was a member of the Church of England, and he was faithful to all of its ordinances and ceremonies. He was a member of a Holy Club at Oxford University, and he practiced all the rules for holy living which he could find in any of the devotional books. He went to communion once a week. He fasted and prayed and sacrificed his time and his strength and his means for the good of all men. He was ridiculed on all hands and called a crack-brained enthusiast. Yet all his ritualism and asceticism and devotion to good works brought him no peace. He felt that he himself was not converted. He went as a foreign missionary to the Indians in Georgia, but in the new continent he failed to find a new heart. He came back to England with the old unrest.

Then one Wednesday night he went to a prayer meeting service in Aldersgate Street in London, and some one read Martin Luther's preface to Paul's Epistle to the Romans. In that preface Luther declares that the man who receives the Holy Spirit through faith "is renewed and made spiritual," and thereafter he finds it easy to fulfill the law because he is constrained thereto "by the vital energy in himself." That was what Luther had found in the epistles of Paul, a vital energy which had made him able to renew the spiritual forces of the nation. That was what Wesley wanted —the vital energy which had made Paul a power for all time to come and had transformed the life of Augustine and had made Luther the great reformer. As he listened to the simple truth of the gospel as set forth by Paul and

interpreted by Luther, Wesley too "experienced an amazing change." He wrote of it afterward: "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." Wesley testified openly to all who were there what he then first felt in his heart, and from that meeting with his new assurance he went forth to a career of unequaled evangelism.[5]

What names can equal these three in their particular fields or in the whole history of the church—Augustine the great theologian, Luther the great reformer, and Wesley the great evangelist? We have seen how all three of these men received the impulse to their life activity, as well as the continuous inspiration of it, from the apostle Paul. Greater than any of them, master of them all, Paul the theologian, reformer, evangelist, and missionary is a vital force in the church to-day. He has imparted something of his vitality to all of his epistles. What Godet said of the Epistle to the Romans might be applied to the epistles as a whole: "The Reformation was undoubtedly the work of the Epistle to the Romans . . . and the probability is that every great spiritual revival in the church will be connected as effect and cause with a deeper understanding of" these books.[6]

It is with some feeling of the unquenchable and inexhaustible vitality in this man and in his epistles that we turn to their study. It is in the faith that multitudes in the days to come, as in the days of the past, will have their hearts strangely warmed and their wills strangely strengthened and their lives strangely transformed by contact with these treasuries of immortal energy that we shall endeavor to present them not as dead and done with but as living forces with their message for to-day. If in any measure the spirit of the man and of his message may be found in these pages,

[5] Tyerman, Life and Times of John Wesley, vol. i, pp. 69–73, 180.

[6] Godet, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, p. 1.

they will be of vital value to those who read. In our study of the epistles we shall find ourselves studying the man again and again. We can understand them only as we come to understand him.

There are no concealments about the apostle Paul. We can congratulate ourselves that his life is like an open book, written by his own hand here in his epistles. Many of the biographical data registered in the book of Acts are not found in the Pauline epistles, but, on the other hand, there are many items of information concerning the public life and career of the apostle Paul scattered throughout these letters which were not recorded by Luke in his biography; and we never could have known the inner life of the apostle if it were not for the innumerable revelations which the epistles afford. In them we sense his spirit and come to know him as he really is. We will attempt, first, to visualize the man, and, second, to get some general view of the epistles, and then, third, we will proceed to the special introduction to each of them.

CHAPTER I

THE APOSTLE

CHAPTER I

THE APOSTLE

We shall attempt no complete biography of the apostle Paul in this connection; but we shall try to get some clear conception of the preparation and equipment of the man who wrote the epistles we are to study. In the Epistle to the Galatians Paul says that God separated him, even from his mother's womb, and called him through his grace, that he might preach the gospel among the Gentiles.[1] We understand this statement to mean that every circumstance of his birth and earliest environment and education and all his experience up to the time of his conversion seemed to Paul marvelously and miraculously to have been calculated to prepare him for the greatest efficiency in his career as missionary among the nations. Looking back upon his life, Paul was ready to say that all things had worked together for his good in getting him ready, all unconsciously though it were, for the work God had for him to do. We can see some very clear reasons for his coming to such a conclusion.

I. Personal Preparation

1. Jewish descent. Paul was born in a Jewish family and was reared in the Jewish faith. Since Jesus was a Jew, and the Christian faith was born among the Jews and was propagated wholly from them in the beginning, it was essential that the most successful missionary in the early church should be a Jew. His race affinities enabled Paul to begin his ministry in each city in the synagogue, in an established meetingplace with a congregation ready assembled and accustomed to religious discussion. He preached

[1] Gal. 1. 15.

by preference to the Jews, and turned to the Gentiles only when the Jews had refused to heed his message. All the first Christian missionaries were Jews and Paul never would have been able to maintain himself among them as their equal and to establish himself at last as their superior if he himself had not been a Jew.

Then, too, among his own countrymen he had certain claims to superiority. He suggests some of these in the Epistle to the Philippians, where he says, "If any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more." [2] He then proceeds to give his reasons for that statement in Phil. 3. 5, 6.

(1) He is of the stock of Israel. He does not say of Abraham, for Abraham's stock included the Ishmaelites. He does not say of Abraham and Isaac, for that stock included the Edomites. He does not say of Jacob the supplanter, but of Israel the prince with God. That was his ancestry. He was in the line of those who wrestled with God and won the victory.

(2) He was of the tribe of Benjamin, and there were several reasons why that would mean much to a Jew. (*a*) Benjamin was the son of the favored wife, and Benjamin alone among the patriarchs had been born in the chosen land. (*b*) The first king of Israel had been taken from the tribe of Benjamin, and the apostle had been named after him. His parents had called him Saul; and Paul was proud of that fact, and he never forgot that he was the namesake of a king. (*c*) The tribe of Benjamin alone had been faithful to the house of David at the time of the Great Schism. The ten tribes had gone off under the leadership of Jeroboam. Judah and Benjamin had maintained the national integrity and faith. (*d*) In the Song of Deborah and in the prophecy of Hosea there was that battle cry, "After thee, O Benjamin!" [3] testifying that Benjamin always held

[2] Phil. 3. 4.

[3] Judges 5. 14; Hosea 5. 8.

the place of honor in the militant host of the Israelites. It was a matter of pride to belong to this faithful and signally honored tribe. The Saul of Old Testament history towered head and shoulders above his fellows, and he had been a right royal soul. This second Saul was to tower above his fellows in intellectual and spiritual accomplishments, and he would be a king among the New Testament leaders of the world reformation. The Benjamites had fought in the first rank in the ancient wars of Israel. This Benjamite always would be found in the front rank of the militant hosts of the new Israel whose mission was to capture all the nations for its Christ. As a true representative of his tribe he could be trusted to be royal and loyal at any cost and all the time.

(3) Paul was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and he was a Pharisee. He belonged to that sect among the Hebrews which was notorious for its scrupulous observance of all the religious ritual, for its patriotism and its zeal, for its piety and devotion. The Pharisees were all zealots, but among them Saul became conspicuous for his zeal. They were all patriots, but Saul was the most ardent partisan among his contemporaries. He came to be the chosen instrument of the Sanhedrin to persecute and to annihilate the Christian Church.

(4) No one could find any fault with Saul's reputation as a legalist. He met all the requirements of Pharisaic righteousness. He claimed in his later life that he had been blameless as judged by their standards, and no one ever disputed his claim. He said to King Agrippa, "My manner of life then from my youth up, which was from the beginning among mine own nation and at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; having knowledge of me from the first, if they be willing to testify, that after the straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee." [4] When the chief captain had rescued

[4] Acts 26. 45.

Paul from the mob at Jerusalem he asked his prisoner who he was, and Paul's first words in answer were, "I am a Jew."[5] Then the chief captain permitted Paul to speak to the people, and Paul began his defense to his own countrymen with the same words, "I am a Jew."[6] Paul always considered that fact a chief asset in his missionary career. If he had been asked to point out the elements which made for his apostolic equipment and success, in all probability he would have begun with the statement that he had been born in a Jewish home and he had been trained in the Jewish faith.

2. **Roman Citizenship.** Paul's father was a Roman citizen, and Paul was born into all the political privileges of the Roman state. What an advantage that was to him in all his apostolic career! He always was disposed to regard the imperial power as the friend of the Christian faith, protecting it from Jewish persecution and saving him again and again from danger to his person and life. He made the most of his Roman citizenship whenever necessity demanded the declaration of it. He usually claimed all of its privileges. He made the prætors at Philippi confess that they had acted illegally in scourging and imprisoning men who were Romans and uncondemned. He made them apologize in person before they set him free.[7] When the chief captain there at Jerusalem would have stretched him upon the rack, thinking he was only a Jew who could be tortured into confession of some wrongdoing, Paul appealed to his exemption from that form of examination as a Roman citizen and uncondemned.[8] As a Roman citizen he pleaded his own case before the Roman governors Felix and Festus, and he finally insisted upon his right as a Roman to appeal his case from their jurisdiction to the court of the emperor himself.[9] In all probability he was the only one among the apostles

[5] Acts 21. 39.
[6] Acts 22. 3.
[7] Acts 16. 37.
[8] Acts 22. 25.
[9] Acts 25. 11.

who could have done such a thing. He was a Jew, but he also was a Roman; and that was a great advantage and distinction.

3. **Greek Environment.** Paul was born and reared in Tarsus, a Greek city of Asia Minor. A Jew by heredity and a Roman by citizenship, he was a Greek by environment. He united in himself the three great influences of that age. He was at home equally with the Jewish religion and the Roman politics and the Greek culture. No other apostle or Christian missionary had this triple advantage in his work. Tarsus was a busy and flourishing city. Paul himself says, "I am . . . a citizen of no mean city." [10] Xenophon tells us that Tarsus was a large and prosperous city in his day. Strabo declares that Tarsus was one of the three great university centers of the world at this time, sharing its preeminence with Athens and Alexandria alone.

(1) It was worth something to Paul to have been born in a city. He was at home in cities. He was city bred, and he liked best to labor in the cities. He was lonesome in the country, and he never cared to stop there long. He passed through it only that he might reach another city. He was used to crowds and to many intermingling nationalities and to the sight of great interests well managed for the good of the community. His city training helped him to become the great organizer of Gentile Christendom and to meet the many peoples among whom he labored without embarrassment and with something of familiarity. No one of the Galilæan peasants in that original apostolic company had any such training; and no one of them was prepared, as Paul was, to meet all classes with confidence and to win different nationalities to Christ. They doubtless would have been confused and at a loss where Paul could meet the emergency easily.

(2) It was worth still more to have been born in a uni-

[10] Acts 21. 39.

versity city. Paul grew up in an intellectual atmosphere. He must have met multitudes of students in the streets of Tarsus, and an active mind like that of Paul would be impressed with the value of an education and would be sure to pick up an appreciation for the Greek culture.

4. Trade. Paul was taught a trade. He was a tentmaker; and we know how often the knowledge of this trade was of practical assistance to him in his ministry. He could work at it wherever he went. A fisherman could not find employment everywhere. A tentmaker could keep busy almost anywhere in the Orient, and just as well inland as on the seashore.

5. Schooling. At Jerusalem, where he was sent to finish his education and to be made a rabbi, Paul entered the school of Gamaliel, the grandson of Hillel and the greatest master of his day.

(1) *With Gamaliel.* Gamaliel was a generous-hearted, broad-minded man, more tolerant than many of his contemporaries. He was principally responsible for the introduction of Greek learning among the Jews. The Jews as a race were intolerant, narrow, exclusive, proud. It was a proverb among them, "Cursed be he that eats pork, and cursed be he that teaches his son the Greek wisdom." The rabbis said: "The Law is all-sufficient for our learning. In Josh. 1. 8 we read, 'This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.' If you would study the Greek wisdom, you must first find an hour that is neither day nor night in which to study it." [11] Gamaliel defied this popular prejudice. His son Samuel says, "There were one thousand students in my father's school, five hundred of whom studied Greek wisdom and five hundred Jewish law." [12] It was into this school that Paul came, and it was here that he advanced in the Jew's religion beyond many of his own age among his

[11] Menachoth, 99, 2.

[12] Babha Kama. f. 83, 1.

countrymen, even as he already was far in advance of them in his knowledge of Greek literature and life.

(2) *With the Scriptures.* There was only one textbook here, as there had been only one in the synagogue school at Tarsus. From a babe Saul had known the sacred writings. As a boy he had committed many portions of them to memory. Now as a young man he heard them expounded by the highest authority. He gave his days and his nights to the study of them. They were a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path. He mastered their contents. Their theology and their phraseology became so familiar to him that they were in his mind and on his lips continually. No one can read the Pauline epistles without being impressed with the fact that Paul thinks in quotations and writes in quotations from the Old Testament.

All of his own teaching is buttressed with proof passages from the Sacred Book. He quotes from one hundred and forty-one different chapters and over two hundred single verses. The Jewish Bible had the three divisions—the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. Paul quotes from all of these divisions. He quotes from each of the five books of the Law. In the second division he quotes from First and Second Samuel, First Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Habakkuk, Zechariah, and Malachi. In the third division he quotes from Psalms, Proverbs, and Job. Among these his favorites would seem to be the book of Psalms and the book of Isaiah. From the former he quotes thirty-three different psalms, and from the latter twenty-nine chapters. He evidently knows all his Bible, and he is so saturated with scripture that he scarcely can write a page without directly or indirectly borrowing from it.[13] Much of this familiarity with the Book must have been won in Gamaliel's school.

Paul soon became a favorite with the ecclesiastical author-

[13] Expositor. Second series, vol. iv, pp. 121f.

ities. He was preeminent in scholastic accomplishment and in religious enthusiasm. Possibly he was put in charge of the synagogue of the Cilicians; and it is altogether probable that here he was one of those who could not withstand Stephen in argument.[14] We know that he was the chosen representative of the Sanhedrin to crush out the Nazarene fanaticism. We know that he consented to the death of Stephen and was present at that first martyrdom.[15] We know that he laid waste the church in Jerusalem, entering every house and dragging men and women from their homes to prison.[16]

While Paul was a zealot for the Law, we may judge from Rom. 7 and other passages that he was dissatisfied with it and was becoming more and more convinced of the Law's absolute insufficiency to meet the deepest needs of the soul. He tried to quiet the hunger of his heart by a more furious activity in persecution. In this period, when he was the intimate and trusted agent of the Jewish leaders, he came to know all that they had to say against the new religion and all that they had to offer in favor of the old. He heard the question argued again and again. He heard the Scriptures cited on either side. He heard the personal testimonies of the Christians who were examined before the synagogue. He heard how their lives were altered and their whole walk and conversation had been exalted by their new experiences. He weighed these things in his own mind and heart. All that happened to him among both the Jews and the Christians was all unconsciously preparing him for a more efficient apostolate.

6. Conversion. Then came the journey to Damascus and Paul's conversion. Renan says that a storm was bursting on the mountains of Lebanon, and a flash of lightning with sudden brilliance struck Paul to the ground and produced

[14] Acts 6. 9, 10.
[15] Acts 8. 1.
[16] Acts 8. 3.

in his active brain an ophthalmic fever, accompanied by violent hallucination; but in Paul's account and in that of Luke there is no lightning flash and no fever, and in Paul's after history there is no hint of any hallucination. Paul saw the resurrected Lord. He heard the voice of Him in whom dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He was commissioned not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.[17]

The greatest event in the history of the human race was the birth of Jesus. The greatest event in the life of Jesus was his resurrection from the dead. After these two moments of primary importance in the history of the human race and of the Christian Church, the next most momentous occurrence in their history was the conversion of Paul. Jesus founded the faith, but Paul was to be the apostle of its universal conquest. The other apostles had no such experience of conversion as Paul underwent on the road to Damascus. They were attracted to the man Jesus and only slowly came to the belief that he was the Son of God and that he had the words of eternal life. There was no sudden, sharp revolution at any turn in their association with him. On the contrary, Paul was struck to the ground by one blinding revelation of the Son from heaven. In one moment he was converted from a proud Pharisee and a fanatical persecutor of the Christian faith into a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, and separated henceforth unto the gospel of God. The other apostles had known Jesus after the flesh. Paul knew him first as the resurrected and enthroned Lord of men. Whatever psychological preparation there may have been for this sudden transformation in Paul's character and career the fact is indisputable that the radical change took place in a single crisis moment of his life. After that Damascus vision he rose to his feet a new

[17] Gal. 1. 1.

man with a new purpose and new powers, capable of turning the world upside down, and ready to do all things which his new Master might require of him in the strength continually sufficient for his need. The conversion of Paul was a capital event in world history. It was something new in the apostolic ranks. A new era in Christendom had dawned with Paul's new birth.

7. **Commission.** Paul was thirty years of age at the time of his conversion. He was martyred at the age of sixty. For thirty years he had been a Pharisee. For thirty years he would be a Christian. In that thirty years he had a gigantic task to perform. A staggering burden was to be laid upon his shoulders. In his own person he must accomplish the work which in the providence of God had been assigned to a nation!

The Jews were the people of promise. Through long centuries they had been the favored of God, among whom alone the knowledge of the true Jehovah was preserved and the expectation of the world-salvation through the Great Deliverer to be sent by Him; and every Jew believed that he, the longed-for Messiah, when he should come, would be the nation's king. He would exalt Israel to world dominion, and all the nations of the earth would be attracted by the light of his salvation and would bow at Israel's feet to have a share in Israel's blessing. Then Jerusalem would be called, The city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of the chosen race.[18] Isaiah had prophesied it. The fathers had awaited it. It surely would come.

The Messiah came in the fullness of time. Israel rejected him. Jerusalem crucified him. He was in the world and the world knew him not. He came to his own and his own received him not. That nation which in God's plan was to have the supreme privilege of welcoming the world Saviour and inaugurating his kingdom and preaching the glory of his

[18] Isa. 60. 14.

name to the eager and expectant earth, that nation which was to be the servant of Jehovah in the evangelization of the many kindreds and peoples and tongues, proved recreant to its high trust at the last; and God's fury was poured out upon it, its fair land was smitten and cursed, and its sons and its daughters were sent wandering out through the continents and the centuries, an excommunicate, vagabond race. Israel had not been wise in the day of its visitation and its greatest blessing had become its greatest curse. The nation had failed to rise to its opportunity and to fulfill its God-appointed task. That task must still be done; and in the nation's stead God puts one man! With strong hand and outstretched arm he laid hold of the one choice spirit who could do a nation's work. That chosen world missionary, the most zealous and the most successful propagator of the universal religion of the Christ, was the converted persecutor of the Christians, Saul.

Henceforth he was an ambassador from heaven, with royal authority, and with a divine commission which no man might question, and no man or body of men might contravene, and no power on earth could countermand. Henceforth the whole world was Paul's parish, and its conversion his one aim in life. Single-handed and alone he set about the work which ought to have been done by his nation. When at the end he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course," he had proven himself worthy of the greatest commission ever given to a mortal man. How did he prepare himself for his colossal enterprise?

8. In Arabia. After his conversion Paul tells us, "Straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia." [19] This statement contains all the information we have concerning this Arabian experience. How long the sojourn in Arabia lasted we do

[19] Gal. 1. 16, 17.

not know. Most of the authorities are disposed to think that three years were spent by Paul in these solitudes, or at least the larger part of the three years which elapsed before he went up to Jerusalem.

We ask three questions concerning this period in Paul's life:

(1) Why did Paul go to Arabia? Would it not have seemed likely that he would wish to go straight back to Jerusalem, or at least to Palestine, after his conversion? If he were to be a Christian, surely he would wish to know all he could about the life and work of Jesus. There he could find the apostles who had companied with him and the disciples who had heard him and had followed him from place to place in Galilee. Surely, Paul would want to get acquainted with them as soon as possible and to get from them all they could impart of information concerning the sayings and the doings of the Lord. We would have thought that Paul would have considered it advisable to confer with flesh and blood about these things at the first opportunity. He did not think so. He did not go in search of historical and biographical data. He went away into Arabia. Arabia was a desert. He could not confer with flesh and blood there. He could commune with God and with his own soul. He could hear the message of the mountains and the disclosures of the desert. Why would he go there?

(*a*) For the same reason that Jesus went into the wilderness after the baptism and the revelation and the commission at the Jordan. Since that date no such staggering burden had been laid upon the shoulders of any man. The soul of Paul craved solitude. He needed to face the problems which his new experience suddenly had thrust upon him. He must wrestle with them alone. With the demons of temptation and the angels of divine consolation he must fast and pray and read and study and meditate until he saw the truth too clearly ever to falter in its advocacy and until

his own soul was so well grounded in the faith that doubt would seem impossible. Paul could have found solitude much nearer to Damascus than Arabia. Why did he travel to this distance to spend his months and years in retirement and meditation?

(*b*) We think that he went to Arabia because Mount Sinai was there. He may have dreamed all his life, as a boy in Tarsus and as a youth in Jerusalem, of a journey some day to the very spot where Moses received the tables of the Law from the hand of God. His whole life had been spent in the endeavor to obey all the precepts of this law. All the religion of his nation had been built up about it. It was the birthplace of Judaism, the most sacred spot upon the earth outside of the temple to the young Pharisee. He may well have contemplated a pilgrimage to it at the first opportunity he had. Now that he was to be a Christian, there was no reason why he should change this plan. There was all the more reason why he should stand upon the ground made sacred by the primitive revelation and ask himself what relation his new revelation might bear to the one given to Moses. It might be that God would speak to him on the mountain top or from some cleft in the rock. God *had* spoken to him, and now he must decide whether, like Moses, he would become a liberator of his people.

(2) What did Paul do in Arabia? He prepared himself for his future ministry. He studied the Scriptures and waited upon God. He formulated his theology. He reasoned it all out. His system of thought was complete before he began to preach. Too many men go into the ministry to-day who are not clear upon many points of doctrine. They do not know what they believe concerning them. They begin to preach and hope that in time the obscurities in their faith will clear away or that they can succeed in concealing their doubts from their people. It was not so with Paul. He knew what he believed from the beginning to the end of his ministry. He was as clear as crystal in

all the fundamentals of his religious thought when he came out of Arabia. There never was any doubt or uncertainty in his preaching after that. We question whether there was any considerable development of doctrine in any of the essentials of his creed from first to last. He had thought it all out before he began to preach it to others.

We can imagine the course of his thought in these days. He began with his own experience. His theology was the outgrowth of his personal convictions based upon the realities of his own heart life. He had seen the risen Jesus. Then the resurrection of which the persecuted Christians had talked was a fact. It was upon that fact that Paul built up the whole structure of his theology. If Jesus was risen from the dead and seated at the right hand of God, he must be the Son of God, even as he said. He must be divine. Then why had he been crucified? How Paul must have pondered that problem! It was such a stumbling-block to any Jew. It must have been that his life was a sacrifice, that he died because we were sinners and not because he was one. In undeserved suffering through a sinless and atoning life and death the Divine Son had become a Saviour! Salvation, then, must be through the acceptance of this fact, through faith in the incarnation and the consequent faith in the atoning life and death of Jesus; and not through any good works which men might or might not do. We can see Paul feeling his way through the maze of questions which beset him and searching the Scriptures to see if these things were so until he came out into the clear sunlight of unalterable conviction. Given the fact of the resurrection, the meaning of the crucifixion followed as the night followed the day. Out of that night of disaster there had come the day of the world's redemption. The dayspring from on high had visited us, and now the Son could be revealed in men.

(3) What was the result of this Arabian sojourn? Paul was the first to see that Christians might be liberated from all bondage to the Law. There in the sterile heights of

Mount Sinai he realized that the whole Pharisaic program was an equally sterile one. The people under the Law were in bondage. They were the children of the slave woman. Only those who were saved by grace could claim to be free. The terrors of the law had to be supplanted by the treasures of grace. Moses was only a pedagogue to lead men to Christ. We think that the doctrine which is set forth in the third and fourth chapters of the Epistle to the Galatians was first formulated by Paul in his stay in Arabia. It was there at Mount Sinai that he came to the conclusion that there was an irreconcilable antagonism between the two systems of salvation represented by Moses and by Jesus. It was there at Mount Sinai that he determined to devote his life to the overthrow of the one and the establishment of the other. Moses had liberated the people from political bondage to Egypt. Paul would liberate the people from spiritual bondage to the law of an external commandment. He would do it by preaching the grace of God as revealed in Jesus.

9. In Syria and Cilicia. "Then I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia."[20] In the hurried autobiographical sketch which Paul gives us in the first chapters of the Epistle to the Galatians he permits this short sentence to cover ten or a dozen years of his life. It was the time of his obscurity. He was trying his powers. He was testing his theology in his preaching. He was proving himself. We know about his labors and his sufferings and his triumphs in the later years. We know little or nothing about him in this time. We are sure that he was busy in evangelistic service, and we think it altogether probable that he was trying different methods and plans and thus was laying the foundation of his future success. To Paul himself these were unquestionably the most important years of his ministry. They were not years of sweeping victory, but they

[20] Gal. 1. 21.

were the years when he was getting ready for such things. The world lost sight of him for a time. People heard only that the persecutor had become a preacher and that he was laboring in some remote district to spread the Christian faith. These were years of patient preparation, of apprenticeship in pioneer missionary work. If Paul could take three years to get his theology clearly formulated, any young man can afford to take an equal time to attain a like result. If Paul could work for ten years in obscurity, surely any young man can be content to labor for the same length of time before he is called into any prominent field.

We now have seen how Paul's Jewish descent, his Roman citizenship, his Greek environment in Tarsus. his rabbinical training in Jerusalem, his conversion at Damascus, his years of solitude and meditation in Arabia, and his longer years of pioneer missionary effort in Syria and Cilicia had helped to prepare him for his apostolate to the nations. Looking back upon his life Paul could not see, and we do not see, how he could have been better equipped than he actually was by the various influences which had molded his character and shaped his career and all unconsciously had fitted him for world-evangelism. Everything had helped to make him ready for the work he now had to do. When Barnabas called him from Tarsus to Antioch, a year of testing there made it apparent to all that the Holy Spirit had separated him for work in wider fields. His missionary journeys and the experiences gathered among many peoples in many lands finished the preparation of the man who was to write the Pauline epistles. We shall try now to get a closer view of him.

II. Personal Appearance

1. **Paul's Physique.** The artists for the most part have been disposed to picture Paul with a commanding physique. Raphael puts a very imposing figure upon the steps of the Areopagus. In the chapel window in the Memorial Hall of

the theological school in Evanston Paul is represented with such a venerable and stately bearing that the visitors have mistaken him for Moses more than once. Moses was a goodly child and probably had a very impressive appearance in later years; but unless all church tradition has gone astray, Paul was not blessed with personal beauty, and his bodily presence was rather insignificant and weak. His enemies in Corinth declared that was so, and while Paul quotes their statement he does not deny the truth of it.[21] He probably realized that his personal appearance was neither a striking nor an attractive one.

All tradition agrees that Paul was a little man, like John Wesley and Napoleon. One ancient writer calls him "a three-cubit man." Most of the modern authorities think that he was a chronic invalid, and that there were times when his malady disfigured him so that his countenance was far from being a pleasant one to look upon.

(1) We know that when the heathen at Lystra were about to offer sacrifices to Barnabas and Paul as gods in human form they called Barnabas Zeus, probably because he was the more majestic and impressive in his appearance, and they called Paul Hermes, as in appearance the smaller and subordinate man.[22]

(2) In the Acts of Paul and Thecla, written in the third century, we have the first description of Paul in church literature. It reads as follows: "He saw Paul coming, a man, small in size, bald-headed, bandy-legged, with meeting eyebrows, hook-nosed, full of grace." [23] We are told that Titus had given Onesiphorus a description of the apostle Paul and that Onesiphorus recognized this little, bald-headed, bandy-legged, hook-nosed man coming down the road as the one who met all the terms of the description and the one he had come forth to seek. This earliest pen picture

[21] 2 Cor. 10. 10.

[22] Acts 14. 12.

[23] Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. viii, p. 487.

of the apostle Paul would seem to reproduce the general church tradition concerning his personal appearance. It evidently was not an imposing one, and his enemies might well call it "weak."

(3) In the fourth century, in the Philopatris of the pseudo-Lucian, Paul is ridiculed as "the bald-headed, hook-nosed Galilæan who trod the air into the third heaven, and learned the most beautiful things." [24]

(4) In the sixth century John of Antioch assures us that "Paul was in person round-shouldered, with a sprinkling of gray on his hair and his beard, with an aquiline nose, grayish eyes, meeting eyebrows, with a mixture of pale and red in his complexion, and an ample beard." [25]

(5) In the fifteenth century Nicephorus writes: "Paul was short and dwarfish in stature, and, as it were, crooked in person and slightly bent. His face was pale, his aspect winning. He was bald-headed, and his eyes were bright. His nose was prominent and aquiline, his beard thick and tolerably long, and both this and his head were sprinkled with white hairs." [26]

Evidently, all of these descriptions agree in the main, and as all of the earliest portraits of the apostle confirm them, we may conclude that the church tradition is a correct one and that Paul's personal appearance was not a particularly prepossessing one. If he were short and stoop-shouldered, bald-headed and bandy-legged and hook-nosed, he could not win his way among men by any imposing personal presence. He may have had a kindly eye and a saintly countenance and a general grace of bearing, but he was sadly handicapped by his physique.

2. **Paul's Health.** Some of Paul's biographers think that he had an exceptionally tough and strong and elastic constitution. They point to facts like these: (1) Such a life as

[24] Philopatr., 12.

[25] x, 257.

[26] H. E., ii, 37.

Paul led, full of hardship and making constant demand upon his physical endurance, would have been impossible without a considerable degree of physical stamina. (2) The rapidity of Paul's recovery from illnesses and scourgings and stonings proves a remarkable elasticity of constitution and a remarkable reserve of physical powers. There is much to be said for this view of the case. Paul endured more than most men could have endured, and he never was superannuated. He lived into a comparatively effective old age.

Other biographers of Paul insist that he was of a very fragile constitution, and always was a weak and ailing man. They remind us that the following things were true of him:

(1) Paul frequently speaks of the infirmity of his flesh[27] and of a thorn in the flesh.[28] He tells us of more than one illness and in one he had despaired of his life.

(2) He seemingly was in need of constant companionship. His traveling company consisted almost always of three men. He began with Barnabas and Mark. Then he had Silas and Timothy, then Titus and Timothy, and then Luke and Aristarchus. He seemed to be very uneasy when left alone. Only once in the whole narrative of the book of Acts is Paul left without any attendants. That was at Athens, and we read that Paul's spirit was much troubled within him, and he sent commandment that Silas and Timothy should come to him just as quickly as possible.[29] Everywhere else some trusted friend is by his side, so that if he is stricken down he may be sure of sympathetic service in his need.

(3) One of these companions, and the one who was with him constantly in all his later days, was the beloved physician, Luke. Luke first joined Paul in his missionary journeying just after Paul had been suffering from some physical disorder in Galatia,[30] and he rejoined the apostle just after that most serious illness in which he had come

[27] Gal. 4. 14.
[28] 2 Cor. 12. 7.
[29] Acts 17. 15.
[30] Gal. 4. 13.

back almost miraculously from the very edge of the grave.[31] From that time Luke never left him. Henceforth Paul had the attendance and the ministrations of a physician as long as he lived.

What shall we conclude in the face of this array of seemingly contrary facts? It seems to us that Paul was physically weak and a chronic invalid, but that he had an indomitable will which compelled his body to exertions unparalleled and which dragged it through sufferings and labors under which any ordinary men and ordinary minds would have succumbed. We think that he belongs to that dauntless and unconquerable handful of the race who by their accomplishment in despite of all physical ills put those of us who are well and strong to constant shame. With bodies disabled by distressing disease and racked with continual pain they do more than a multitude of other men who never know what sickness is and never struggle against any physical handicap. We have all the greater admiration for this little man with his colossal achievement if we conclude that we find in him one of the best examples in world history of the triumph of the spirit over all physical disabilities in the persistent prosecution of his work without any thought of sparing himself because he was stricken down sometimes, or because he was sick most of the time, or because he was not as well as other men all the time. He did not hold his life of any account as dear unto himself as long as he might accomplish his course and the ministry which he had received from the Lord Jesus.[32]

3. **Paul's Thorn in the Flesh.** In the first verses of the twelfth chapter of Second Corinthians Paul speaks of certain ecstatic experiences he had had some fourteen years before, and then he adds, "And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a mes-

[31] 2 Cor. 1. 9.

[32] Acts 20. 24.

senger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch. Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." [33]

This is the only occurrence of the phrase "a thorn in the flesh" in the Pauline epistles, and from this passage we gather the following facts concerning it.

(1) It was some sort of an agonizing bodily pain. The translation "thorn" probably is too mild for the Greek word *σκόλοψ*. It may be rather a "stake." Then the experience would not be represented by the prick of a thorn or even the pain caused by the deep piercing of a thorn which could be extracted with more or less ease. It would be represented better by the agony of the unfortunate wretch who was impaled on a stake. It would stand for the most excruciating torture which a mortal might bear.

(2) It was recurrent or intermittent. Paul says that he prayed three times concerning it. It would be natural to conclude that these prayers were offered at the time of the three illnesses of which we find explicit mention in the epistles—the experience mentioned in this passage, the sickness in Galatia, and the later sickness in Asia Minor, in which Paul had received the sentence of death. We may not be sure that these were the three occasions on which he prayed, but it would appear probable if a certain malady which seemed to him like a stake in the flesh had fallen upon him three times.

(3) Possibly we may infer from this context that this infirmity was an accompaniment or a result of certain

[33] 2 Cor. 12. 7–10.

ecstatic experiences in which Paul had had visions and voices not granted to men in normal conditions. He had been lifted at this time into the third heaven and might have been in danger of being exalted overmuch.

(4) It would seem to be apparent also that there were certain residual effects of this suffering, such as weakness and mental depression.

There is another passage in the epistles which most of the commentators are disposed to consider in connection with Paul's "stake in the flesh." In writing to the Galatians he said, "Ye know that because of an infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you the first time: and that which was a temptation to you in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but ye received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where then is that gratulation of yourselves? for I bear you witness, that, if possible, ye would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me." [34] If the malady referred to here is the same as the stake in the flesh mentioned in Second Corinthians, we learn the following additional facts concerning it.

(5) It was a temptation to the Galatians to despise Paul and to reject him and his message. The word which we translate "reject" means, literally, to "spit out" or execrate as an object of loathing or disgust.

We may conclude therefore, finally, that

(6) There was something objectively repulsive about this disease.

All of the earliest writers on the subject think of Paul's thorn in the flesh as some form of bodily disease, and modern thought seems to be tending back to that original position. However, some other suggestions have been made concerning it, and it may be well to notice them at this point:

(1) Roman Catholic authorities, such as Aquinas, Bellarmine, Gregory the Great, and the Venerable Bede, con-

[34] Gal. 4. 13–15.

cluded that it was some form of unclean thoughts or carnal temptations which kept recurring to the apostle's mind and which were recognized by him as messengers of Satan to humiliate him and keep him dependent upon divine grace at all times. The Vulgate translated σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί by *stimulus carnis,* and that suggestion seems to have appealed very forcibly to those who were under the rigors of monastic discipline. Such an interpretation has been rightly called "an outrage on the great apostle." It is wholly gratuitous to assume that Paul was troubled in any such manner. The tenor of all his epistles would lead us to believe that he lived on a plane of lofty spiritual triumph over such things. He claimed a charism of continence for himself, and we know nothing in his self-revelation in his epistles or in his biography in the book of Acts to contradict this claim.

(2) It was but natural that the great reformers should react from this Roman Catholic exegesis as from so many other things connected with that church. Gerson and Luther and Calvin said that the thorn in the flesh was not carnal but spiritual in character. It might have included such suggestions of Satan as shrinking from apostolic duties, blasphemous thoughts, doubts, stings of conscience for the past, despair for the present and the future. It would seem to be sufficient to say of all these things that there is no hint of them in our New Testament. Then, surely, Paul never would have gloried in things like these. He would have been heartily ashamed of them.

(3) Some of the still older writers—Chrysostom, Theodoret, Theophylact, Augustine, Hilary, and others—thought that all of these passages referred to the opposition and the persecution of the Jews. Wherever Paul went this antagonism of his own countrymen was as a thorn in his side and a stake in his flesh. To mention only one objection to this suggestion, the first occurrence of this infirmity as mentioned by Paul was ten years after his conversion, and there had been a deal of persecution from the Jews before that.

(4) So we come back to some form of bodily disease for the explanation of all the features included in Paul's description of the stake in his flesh; and we ask, "What form of disease will meet most nearly all the requirements of the case?" Here again many answers have been made to the question:

(*a*) Tertullian and Jerome said that it was *severe headache* or *earache,* and the unbroken tradition in Asia Minor coming down from the second century has been to that effect. It is difficult, however, to see how such an affliction would make Paul an object of contempt or of loathing to the Galatians. They would be more likely to have sympathy for such suffering than to find it repulsive to them.

(*b*) Professor Alexander suggests that Paul was subject to *Malta Fever* or *Mediterranean fever,* and he tries to show that the three illnesses of Paul were coincident with his exposure in the regions affected by this disease and that his symptoms were the symptoms easily traced in this fever to-day. It is accompanied with terrible headaches, rheumatic-like pains and neuralgias, nocturnal deliriums, and consequent impairment of the memory. After a first occurrence it is apt to be repeated. The hair may fall out and there may be disagreeable skin eruptions.

(*c*) Professor Ramsay had conjectured *malarial fever.* This fever comes in recurrent attacks and it is accompanied with a severe headache which is said by those who have experienced it to be "like a red-hot bar thrust through the forehead." Upon the basis of certain inscriptions found in Asia Minor Ramsay argues that anyone with this affliction was considered under the curse of God. These suggestions of fever seem to many minds to fall short of real adequacy to meet the requirements of the case. Either Paul's language is unusually extravagant in his description of his disease or these fevers are too mild in their character to represent the agony, the loathing, and the well-nigh fatal result of Paul's infirmity.

(*d*) *Acute ophthalmia.* Farrar, Howson, Lewin, Plumptre, and many others think that Paul's trouble was with his eyes. They remind us of the following facts: (a) Paul was blinded on the way to Damascus by a light beyond the brightness of the sun. His eyes were weakened by this shock and never may have recovered from it in later life. (b) The sojourn in Arabia immediately after the Damascus experience would have tended to develop any inflammation of the eyes, and such trouble may have been aggravated there in the dazzling lights of the desert. (c) All travelers in the Orient can testify to the loathsomeness and repulsiveness of those who are suffering from the acute stages of this disease. (d) Paul says that the Galatians overcame their temptation in his flesh, and instead of rejecting him with loathing they would have plucked out their eyes and given them to him. Does not this language suggest that he needed better eyes than he had, and that in their great devotion to him they were ready to supply his need with their own eyes, if that had been possible? (e) Further evidence of his defective eyesight is furnished in the fact that Paul could not recognize the high priest across the council chamber at the time of his defense before the Sanhedrin. (f) This may account also for his constant use of an amanuensis in the writing of his epistles. (g) In the adding of a salutation with his own hand at the end of the Epistle to the Galatians Paul calls attention to the fact that he writes with large letters; and we are told that these large letters are such as a half-blind man would be apt to use. (h) This disease in its acute stages produces a pain like a thorn in the flesh, and sometimes it causes brain troubles and epileptic symptoms.

Since our three greatest biographers of Paul have agreed upon this suggestion, it would seem that there must be comparatively good ground for it, and some of the reasons just mentioned have some pertinency. We can believe that Paul's eyes were not of the best. He was a great student and reader all his life, and students seldom have the most

effective eyesight. Such a trouble, however, would be chronic rather than intermittent; and we would be slow to think that Paul's eyes continually were in such a condition as to excite a feeling of loathing or of disgust in those with whom he associated or to whom he preached.

(*e*) *Epilepsy.* Some first-class authorities have been inclined to find Paul's thorn in the flesh in occasional epileptic seizures. Among these we may name Ewald, Farrar, Hausrath, Holsten, Hofmann, Krenkel, Lightfoot, Schaff, and Schmiedel. In simple and devout minds there is a natural feeling of revulsion against such a suggestion as this. They think they could not believe in the unique greatness of the apostle any longer, if they found that he was subject to fits of this sort; but the authorities whom we have mentioned find no such difficulty. They have no trouble in believing in Paul's extraordinary inspiration and unparalleled intellect and incomparable achievement even though he were an epileptic. They find parallels in the trances of Socrates, the fits of Mohammed, the faintings and ecstasies of Saint Bernard, Saint Francis, and Saint Catherine of Siena, and in the mystical pathological experiences of Ansgar, George Fox, Jacob Boehme, David Joris, and Swedenborg. Other distinguished epileptics in church and world history have been Julius Cæsar, Augustine, King Alfred, Savonarola, Pascal, Petrarch, Molière, Handel, Peter the Great and Napoleon Bonaparte.

The tradition is that when they complained to Abraham Lincoln that General Grant was drinking too much, Lincoln answered: "Please find out what brand of whisky it is which he uses. I would like to give some to the rest of my generals." He preferred national victories with the rumor of some personal failings to a record of unblemished reputations and unbroken defeats. After looking over a list of such great names in political and religious leadership, in poetry, music, and drama, in philosophy and theology, one wonders if even epilepsy would be too high a price to pay for admis-

sion into such illustrious companionship. At least it is clear that such an affliction is not incompatible with surpassing clearness of intellect and all the unusual accomplishments of great genius.

On the positive side, those who hold that Paul was of a highly nervous temperament, subject to pathological disturbances and epileptic seizures, declare that here we have the explanation of all the features connected with Paul's description of his thorn in the flesh. (a) It is recurrent. It may not be felt through long intervals and then may come back unexpectedly after the lapse of years. (b) It is humiliating. While it lasts the victim is unconscious and helpless. (c) It is repulsive to those who look on. (d) It is frequently accompanied with visions and ecstasies. (e) It was believed by the Jews to be a visitation from Satan. (f) It was a custom among the ancients to spit out at the sight of an epileptic seizure, to express their abhorrence or to ward off the demonic possession. We recall that Paul wrote to the Galatians concerning his infirmity, "Ye did not despise it, nor did ye spit it out."

(*f*) Professor Herzog in arguing against this assumption of epilepsy as the recurrent malady of Paul, concludes for himself that Paul's affliction consisted of "neurasthenic conditions in consequence of repeated overexertions and an excessive strain upon the nerve system, combined with periodic nervous pains."

What shall we conclude in the face of this conflict of opinions among the writers on this subject? First, that we are not likely to reach any certainty in the matter at this late date. If the facts were at all clear, there would have been a more general agreement. Second, while the exact nature of the malady may be undetermined, almost all would agree that Paul was subject to some physical infirmity which he esteemed a great handicap but for the endurance of which he had sufficient grace, and in spite of which he did his marvelous work with unabating zeal and unflagging energy.

Does not such a man compel our admiration all the more, a man with some fearful physical handicap who is spiritually strongest just when he is physically weakest, a man who glories in the grace which enables him to triumph all the time in spite of all the infirmities in his flesh?

How, then, shall we picture to ourselves the Paul who wrote these epistles? A short, almost dwarfish-looking man, with a bald head and a long gray beard; a little stooped, and with eyes rather weakened by much reading and constant exposure to the fierce Oriental sun; subject to a physical infirmity which most men would have considered a sufficient excuse for incapacity but which he made only an incentive to greater spiritual strengthening; swarthy, full of energy, full of grace! Having suggested these things concerning the personal preparation and the personal appearance of the apostle Paul, do we know what manner of man he was? By no means! There may have been a thousand Jews with a personal preparation like that of Paul who were not in the least like him in any other respect. There may have been multitudes of Jews who resembled Paul in their personal appearance and who never suggested in their lives any approximation to his mighty personality. The secret of Paul's unique career is to be found in his spirit and not in his outward appearance or the circumstances of his environment and education. We turn next to a short study of his personal characteristics, knowing that in these we will come closer to the apostle than as yet we have been able.

III. Personal Characteristics

Schürer says of Paul, "He was the most living and mobile spirit the world has ever seen." Shaw adds to this statement: "He was so versatile in his gifts and interests that we have scarcely noted one distinguishing trait when we feel we must set another beside it that looks like its opposite. His personality was magnetic; he attracted and repelled with equal force. Many never omitted to notice his insignificant

stature, his marred visage, his weak and often distorted frame, his unpolished and provincial speech; but to others the bright spirit, the tender heart, and the shining light of the inspired eyes so transfigured him that they saw no defect, and were ready to receive him as an angel of God. He boasted of being both Jew and Gentile, and he sometimes showed the narrow strength of the one, and sometimes the cultured humanism of the other. He loved perfectly, and he also hated with all his might. At times he soothes with the gentle touches of a friend, but he can also lash with the fiery indignation of a foe. He is equally to be dreaded by an adversary when he endeavors to persuade and when he determines to confound. There are moments when he is prudent and cautious to a degree; anon he is impetuous and impulsive to the very verge of rashness. Moods of passion and of peace, like the changes of April skies, alternate in his life. Now he is so moved with anxiety that he cannot rest or restrain his tears; again, he is so confident in God that no disaster or infirmity can make him dismayed; now he is humble, self-abased, seemingly abject in his own eyes, and again he is radiant and jubilant, absolutely confident in the power and triumph of the indwelling Christ. One wonders if the same man speaks, and whether a single soul could ever compass in its experience such heights and depths." [35] We shall attempt no adequate characterization of such a many-sided personality as that of the apostle Paul. We shall point out only a few of his more prominent qualities of heart and life.

1. **Sensibility, Sympathy, Love, and Hate.** Paul is a man of tender sensibilities, of boundless affection for his friends and his converts and all who need his help and his gospel. His heart overflows with love to all alike. His sympathies are always active and always urgent. He is ready to spend and be spent in the service of the race. He is an ardent spirit, never satisfied with half-way measures,

[35] Shaw, The Pauline Epistles, pp. 490, 491.

pressing on to the uttermost of sacrifice and devotion. Who are these people for whom he suffers so unsparingly and toils so terribly? Are they poor slaves and old women or are they rulers of the synagogue and men in high official position in the state? It matters not who they are, since Christ died for them. All are alike dear to Paul. He prays for them, labors with them, pleads, chides, is instant in season and out of season for their salvation and their growth in grace.

He was an example of perfect love, not put on or professed, but burning, unquenchable, inexhaustible. It constrained him, consumed him. He counted not his life dear unto himself, but laid it freely with every dawn upon the altar of sacrifice. He loved his way into the hearts of men. His love begot love in others. People were devoted to him because they were so sure of his devotion to them. Young men especially were attracted to him. They were ready to leave friends and home and every other prospect in life to attach themselves to him and to share in all the hardships of his missionary career. Where he led, Timothy, Titus, Luke, and others were ready to follow. With him they could endure anything for the sake of the cause. It was so with multitudes of others wherever Paul went. They forsook their ancient faiths, they suffered social ostracism and civil persecution, they contributed out of deep poverty and beyond their means, they proved their loyalty without counting the cost. This little man with the great heart, to whom love was no profession but a possession, bound hearts to him with stronger bands than those of steel.

He had marvelous results in his ministry. He appealed to Jews and Greeks and barbarians; and men of every race and every class in society were converted and became trusted champions of his cause. They would have plucked out their eyes for him. They could not do enough for him. They wept when he left them, and rejoiced that he was coming to them again. How courteous Paul was with all

these people! How tender in his treatment of them! They never doubted the absolute sincerity of his interest in them and his love for them. Their faith in him led many to faith in his message. Their faith in him made them faithful through life.

However, with all this womanly tenderness and love, we must not forget that Paul united the opposite characteristics of inflexible severity and manly hatred of all which set itself in opposition to his Master and Lord. A volume could be written upon the manliness of the apostle Paul. We pass by all the proofs of it at this time and notice only how Paul's anger flamed forth upon occasion. Love is not inconsistent with hate. It necessitates hate. John Morley has said that an active hatred of cruelty, injustice, and oppression is perhaps the chief characteristic of a good man.[36] Paul had this hatred. He was angry with injustice always. We know that, because we see that he was ready to demand his just rights upon all proper occasions.

The Philippian magistrates sent word that Paul and Silas might be released from their imprisonment; but Paul stood on his dignity. He was not willing to go away quietly from that prison into which he had been thrown after an illegal scourging and without a trial, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing those Roman magistrates with love. Not he! His eyes blazed with indignation, and he said to that trembling and fearing jailer: "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and every time that the thongs struck my back I said to myself that I would make them smart for it when I had the chance; and they have cast us into prison, and do they now cast us out privily? Nay verily; but let them come themselves and bring us out."[37]

There in the council at Jerusalem Paul declared that he had lived before God in all good conscience until that day,

[36] Life of Gladstone, vol. i, p. 196.

[37] Acts 16. 37.

and the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood near him to smite him on the mouth. Then in continued good conscience Paul burst out into unhesitating denunciation, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: and sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" [38] He said afterward that he did not know that he was talking to the high priest, but we fail to find any record that he took back anything he had said about him. He did say that the law in Exodus forbade one to speak evil of a ruler of the people; but we judge that he felt that he had not been speaking evil but telling the truth about this one. His anger was hot against the illegality and the injustice of his treatment, and he felt that his language had been justified by that treatment.

Paul's anger blazed just as fiercely against his antagonists in the work of the gospel and the perverters of the truth of God. There was that sorcerer Elymas who tried to rob Paul of his first illustrious convert, the proconsul Sergius Paulus. Paul faced Elymas and, filled with the Holy Spirit, he said to him, "Thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, . . . thou shalt be blind . . . for a season!" [39] Paul had poor eyes himself. He had been blinded once by the revelation of the truth. If he had suffered like that in getting at the truth as it is in Jesus, he had no hesitancy in inflicting blindness on any other man in hope of the same result with him; and if in the case of Elymas it did not result in his accepting the truth, he deserved to be blind anyway.

Paul was just as angry with Peter when Peter did not walk uprightly according to the truth of the gospel there at Antioch; and he withstood Peter face to face and before the whole congregation he accused Peter of hypocrisy and

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[38] Acts 23. 3.

[39] Acts 13. 9–11.

disloyalty and he declared that Peter made Christ the minister of sin and so made void the grace of God.[40]

Paul did not mince his words on that occasion, any more than he did when he wrote more deliberately to the Galatians, "If an angel from heaven should preach to you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema ["let him be accursed, let him be damned"]. As we have said before, so now I say again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye have received, let him be damned."[41] Our translation, "Let him be anathema," does not sound so badly to our ears, but to those who first read his words they meant just what we mean when we say, "Let him be damned!" and therefore that might be the more faithful translation.

There is something of "grim ferocity" about this language. There is nothing delicate in it. It is offensive to white-fingered and white-cheeked and white-livered people who sit in their easy-chairs and read these burning words to-day. They blush when they read them, and they blush more when they read that passage farther on in the Epistle to the Galatians in which Paul says: "I wish that those who unsettled you on the subject of circumcision would go off and castrate themselves![42] Possibly in that way they would lose all further interest in the subject." They think that such language ought not to be used in the presence of ladies. Paul was not thinking about the ladies when he dictated those words. He was hot with anger against the Judaizers who were making trouble for him through all the Gentile field. He had to say something which would stop it; and he did. His righteous anger brought about a righteous result.

Paul was every inch a man. He could fight manfully wherever any principle which was worth fighting for was

[40] Gal. 2. 11–21.
[41] Gal. 1. 8, 9.
[42] Gal. 5. 11.

involved; and he never fought as one that beateth the air. He hit hard and he hit where it hurt. He was a little man, but nobody could run over him without noticing it. He called attention to the fact with the most forcible language and the most forcible action at his command. In the Roman prison cell he wrote to Timothy to come quickly to see him again before he died. He had almost finished the last letter he ever wrote, as far as we know; but before he ended it he said, "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord will render to him according to his works: of whom do thou also beware; for he greatly withstood our words.[43] It was one last flash of the old hot anger against the enemies of the truth for the propagation of which he had given his life.

Did we say that Paul was flaming with love, unquenchable, inexhaustible, consuming love, which won the love of others wherever he went? We say now that Paul was flaming with hate, ardent, inflexible, consuming hate, which won for him the hatred of multitudes wherever he went. There is no inconsistency between these two facts. The one necessitated the other; for Paul loved men and hated sin. He loved the good and true and pure, and that meant that he hated the bad and the false and the impure. With the intensity of his hatred he appealed to men and women with red blood in their veins just as much as by the ardor of his love he appealed to men and women with the milk of human kindness within them. He was so human in his likes and dislikes that some people loved him and some people hated him, as they will love and hate any genuine soul in a world full of shams and the half-sincere. He himself was a flaming fire of love and hate, and he either scorched and blasted those with whom he came into contact or he kindled corresponding affection in their hearts.

2. **Humility and Self-Assertion.** We notice next another

[43] 2 Tim. 4. 14, 15.

apparent contradiction in this complex character—the seeming inconsistency between his humility and his self-assertion. Saul had said to Samuel in the old narrative, "Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin?" [44] Yet when he was made king we remember what a royal soul he was. Paul had been named after him, and when he changed his name from Saul to Paul it may have been in the spirit of deepest humility which characterized the youthful Saul, for "Paul" means "the little one." He said, "I am the chief of sinners." [45] He said, "I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle." [46] He said, "I am less than the least of all the saints." [47] He said, "Who is weak, and I am not weak?" [48] He was the servant of Jesus Christ and he was at the service of all whom Christ loved.

He was humble in spirit, ready to acknowledge that his speech upon occasion had been hasty and open to misconception, and therefore willing to take time and pains to set things right again. He was prepared to make concessions to natural prejudices and to put himself into compromising situations as long as fundamental principles were not involved. Yet at the same time he never allowed his sympathies to permit him or anyone else to question his authority in its rightful field or his superiority when his apostleship was concerned. When self-assertion seemed necessary he never hesitated on any ground of undue modesty or false humility. He set himself up as a model for all his converts everywhere. He said to them, "Be ye imitators together of me." [49] He said to them, "The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do." [50] He knew that he behaved himself

[44] 1 Sam. 9. 21.
[45] 1 Tim. 1. 15.
[46] 1 Cor. 15. 9.
[47] Eph. 3. 8.
[48] 2 Cor. 11. 29.
[49] Phil. 3. 17.
[50] Phil. 4. 9.

holily and righteously and unblamably in all things and that his converts could find no higher exemplification of all the truth he taught than his life would furnish them. Yet with all this self-assertion of his realization of the ideal in his religious experience there is the consummate humility which alone could make it possible. He says, "I live, yet not I. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." [51]

Paul knew that he was the superior of all the apostles. He knew that he had a better conception of the scope of the gospel and that he had made a better record in the preaching of it than any of them. He said, "In nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles." [52] Yet with all this self-assertion of his unquestioned superiority there was the humility which made him great. He said, "I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." [53] Paul was too sincere a man not to recognize the plain facts of the case—that he had no equal in the early church in the clearness of his insight and the completeness of his achievement. Yet he was too humble a man to believe that any credit belonged to him rather than to the abounding grace of God which alone had made it possible. In himself he was nothing, but he could do all things through the Christ who strengthened him.

3. **Courage and Patience.** In this consciousness we find the secret of the courage and the patience which were so characteristic of Paul in all his ministry. He said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel." [54] and he never was ashamed of anything which the gospel gave him to do. He walked through the world with brow unabashed and with the firm step of a conqueror. He was God's nobleman, in the service of heaven. He stood before the crowned monarchs of earth as their teacher, accuser, superior; and they trembled

[51] Gal. 2. 20.
[52] 2 Cor. 12. 11.
[53] 1 Cor. 15. 10.
[54] Rom. 1. 16.

before the power of his words. He met the philosophers in Athens with a higher truth than their philosophies had dreamed of; and some of them accepted and believed. He faced the mobs of Jerusalem, Ephesus, and Philippi with fearless bravery; and they always felt that they had to do with a dauntlessly royal spirit when they tried to lay hands upon him. He was a man always. He was a hero everywhere. He had the absolute courage of his convictions, and there are not many men in any century or in all the centuries of whom that can be said in truth.

It was an act of supreme courage with which he began his Christian career. We read the account of his conversion and then the statement follows that straightway in the synagogues of Damascus he proclaimed that Jesus was the Son of God. All who heard him were amazed, for this was the man who had been aflame with zeal against the Christians, making havoc of all who called upon the name he now proclaimed as divine. Paul knew there would be multitudes everywhere who would say that he was a turncoat and a traitor, but he never hesitated on that account. With completeness of decision he espoused the new cause with all the fervor he had displayed in the old, and then without wavering he fought the good fight to the end. Henceforth his most bitter antagonists were his old friends. Naturally enough they hated him with a deadly hatred, and they did all they could to hinder his work and to rob him of the fruits of his labors, and they lay in wait for him to assassinate him. He was in peril from his own countrymen all the time.

He was on his way to Jerusalem for the last time, and in every city the Holy Spirit testified to him that bonds and afflictions awaited him there, but Paul said, "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." [55] Many a man would have fal-

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[55] Acts 21. 13.

tered somewhere along the line subject to continuous fusillade and enfilade; but Paul never flinched. He went straight forward through the midst of his foes, never swerving for a moment, never compromising at any point. He antagonized the prejudices of the Jews, he trampled upon their conventions, he outraged their sensibilities, he defied their conservatism. He was ready to do and to die in behalf of the truth he upheld. God had not given to him the spirit of a coward. If John Mark was a coward, let him go home to his mother; but never let him ask to go with Paul again until he had proven that he had more courage than a mouse. The apostle of the lion heart would have nothing to do with a spirit of fearfulness. He exhorts Timothy to stalwartness of conduct and character; and he gave to all of his disciples and converts an example of unflinching fidelity to the cause.

His dreams at night reproduced his meditations by day. At Corinth the Jews had driven Paul out of their synagogue, and doubtless there were many to counsel more moderation in his manner of preaching unpalatable truth, but in a vision of the night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace." [56] At Jerusalem the mob had threatened to tear Paul to pieces, and the soldiers had rescued him and shut him up in their prison; and that night the Lord stood by him, and said: "Courage, Paul! Cheer up! All that you have suffered here at Jerusalem you shall also suffer at Rome." [57] In the Euraquilo storm, when everybody believed that all would be lost, Paul said to them, "There stood by me this night an angel of God whose I am, whom also I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul." [58] Paul never was afraid, not even at night, not even in his dreams. He was fearful that his converts might not be steadfast. He was fearful that he himself might not give all that was

[56] Acts 18. 9.

[57] Acts 23. 11.

[58] Acts 27. 23, 24.

in him of strength of mind and body and will to his Master; but he never was fearful of any danger or any opposition of devils or men.

They stoned Paul at Lystra and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. When he returned to consciousness he rose to his feet and, instead of running away as fast as he could, he "entered into the city" [59] again. Then, after going on to Derbe with Barnabas, "they returned to Lystra." [60] Lystra had no terrors for Paul, even though he just had been stoned nearly to death in that place. He wrote to the Corinthians that he would tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost, and he gave them two reasons for that decision: "A great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." [61] Most of us would have said, "But there are many adversaries." Paul said "and," and we can imagine the smile of satisfaction with which he dictated that statement. He enjoyed a good fight, or, whether he enjoyed it or not, he was a good fighter.

Much of the material in the Pauline epistles was occasioned by some controversy, and there never is a hint anywhere in them that Paul is willing to shade the truth in the least degree in order to curry favor with any opponent. He stands by his guns. His courage mounts as perils thicken. There were dangers and disappointments all along the way. There was suffering and sacrifice of every sort. There were incredible toils and continual hardships. Through them all Paul approved himself as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. When Paul was converted and called to be the chosen vessel of the Lord in the campaign for the world's evangelization the message given him through Ananias was, "I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake." [62] Paul foresaw the suffering and deliberately committed himself to his career. He ran the race set before him without asking that the race course

[59] Acts 14. 20.
[60] Acts 14. 21.
[61] 1 Cor. 16. 9.
[62] Acts 9. 16.

be swept clear of all pebbles or sharp stones or thorns. His vigor never abated. His pace never lessened. He never paused for the filing of a complaint or for anything else. He finished his course with unrelaxing effort and undiminished zeal. His patience and perseverance never have been surpassed. Have his devotion and consecration ever had a parallel?

If any man think himself qualified to do it, let him sit and sneer at the apostle Paul; but he challenges a comparison between himself and the apostle when he does it. His little head and his little heart and his little record of achievement look puny and pitiable by the side of those of Paul. We think that Paul might well say to-day what he said to the Corinthians long ago, "We are not bold to number or compare ourselves with certain of them that commend themselves: but they themselves, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding."[63] "All the peaks soar, but one the rest excels"—Paul of the high heart, Paul the unafraid.

4. Consecration and Devotion. Paul's courage was born of his faith and devotion. His consecration was complete. He was on the Lord's side for good and for all. His faith was unfailing that the Lord was on his side for good and for all. "Perhaps in all human story there never has been a life that surpassed Paul's in its abandonment to one great purpose. He could say as almost none other ever could, 'This one thing I do.' The love of Christ, the service of Christ to which that love inspired, and the consuming desire to be like Christ, were the master-impulses of his life. No earthly terror or prize or ambition ever could draw him from his allegiance."[64] He could say, "For me to live is Christ."[65] He was the slave of Jesus Christ, a man of magnificent powers, all of them utterly consecrated to the

[63] 2 Cor. 10. 12.

[64] Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 489.

[65] Phil. 1. 21.

service of the cross—intellect, affections, will, body, soul, spirit, wholly given to his Lord. His heart was undivided. His eye was single. To his mind the plan of salvation was unique, supreme, all-sufficient. He saw the Christian system clearly and he saw it whole. He never attempted to serve two masters. It never entered his heart to think of such a thing. With him it was Christ first, Christ last, Christ all the time. His one aim was to represent Christ worthily in the world and to the world.

The other disciples had asked the Master, "What then shall we have?"[66] When Paul once had had a vision of Jesus his only question was, "What shall I do, Lord?"[67] Thereafter he lived the faith he preached. His Christian character was his Christian walk. Every step he took was in the way of the Lord's commandments. There never was a better example of concentration of effort and consecration of soul. He could apply to his life the words of the forty-fourth psalm, "For thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."[68] He was in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, in obscurity, in poverty, in dishonor of evil reports; and through it all he was as true to his mission and his Master as though it cost him nothing at all. Then there were days of peace when he was flattered by friends and glorified by his devoted followers, and he felt that he possessed all things and stood in need of nothing; and he was just as humble in spirit and faithful in service as before. Circumstances did not change him. He was true-hearted and whole-hearted to the end.

5. Saintliness. It follows from what we have said that Paul was characterized by saintliness of conduct and character beyond any other of the more prominent heroes of the

[66] Matt. 19. 27.
[67] Acts 22. 10.
[68] Rom. 8. 36.

Christian faith. We know more about Paul's inner life than we know of that of any other Christian in the early centuries. There is a degree of self-revelation in the epistles which has no parallel in Christian literature until Augustine wrote his Confessions. When we compare the Confessions of Augustine with the epistles of Paul we see at once the striking and almost irreconcilable difference between the two. Augustine's spiritual autobiography is rightly named. It is a series of confessions of shortcomings and failures and defects, with occasional glimpses of profound philosophy and constant longings for holiness unattained. Now it is a strange fact that in all the epistles of Paul there are no such confessions of spiritual inconsistencies and deficiencies and delinquencies as we find in the lives of most of the saints. Paul refers to himself and to his manner of life as a Christian and to his ministry as an apostle again and again, both in his speeches recorded in the book of Acts and in his epistles, and never once does he express any penitence for wrongdoing of any sort. He was the chief of sinners before he was converted. He acknowledges that fact without any hesitation. After his conversion there is no acknowledgment of sin. On the contrary, in passage after passage he confidently affirms that he has been an example to all believers in purity of motive and integrity of life. He appeals to his converts again and again to testify to the holiness and unblamableness of his behavior among them at all times.

If the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans may be taken as a picture of the apostle's experience as a Pharisee and before his conversion, the eighth chapter of the same epistle just as certainly ought to be received as a faithful portrayal of the apostle's experience after his conversion. It begins with "no condemnation" for those who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, and it ends with "no separation" between the Christ and those who are more than conquerors through him. It is no ideal picture of an impos-

sible state of grace. It had been realized in Paul himself. At the point of loyalty, devotion, and consecration his conscience was clear. He never had any condemnation because of any conscious deficiency in these. From the moment of his conversion to the day of his death he seems never to have known any separation in mind and heart, in soul and spirit from his Lord. In him Paul found sufficient grace and comfort and salvation. In him Paul gained the victory all the time and was made more than conqueror.

If Paul had backslidden at any time, he is too honest a soul to have concealed the fact. If he had been conscious of falling into disfavor with the God whom he served or the Christ whom he proclaimed, he could not have repressed the acknowledgment of it in some one of his utterances or his writings. His theology is the outgrowth of his own experience. In some one of the theological epistles he would have made room in his system for failures which seemed to him inevitable. He never does make any allowance for sin. In some one of his more personal and intimate epistles he would have been sure to let slip the fact that he himself had not met his ideal. No confession of that sort ever escapes him. There was no such confession to make.

We must not forget in this connection what we have said concerning Paul's humility. He has no spirit of Pharisaic self-congratulation. His testimony is always to the glory of his Lord and to the sufficiency of his grace. It is always, "Not I, but Christ." There is no proud boasting of his own achievement. There is only humble testimony to the salvation he had found in the gospel. Paul had found salvation from sin, and he believed that it was to the glory of his Master and for the good of his fellow men that he should give continuous, humble testimony to that fact. That testimony occurs in page after page of his epistles. Why should any one hesitate to accept it? Why should any one be disposed to discount it in any particular? Why may we not conclude that in Paul we have one magnificent example of

the all-sufficiency of divine grace to meet every human need? Then why may we not conclude to our comfort that what was possible with Paul has been made possible to many others of the more obscure followers of the revelation of grace in the gospel? There in the beginning books of the New Testament we find the picture of Jesus, the Saviour. In the Pauline epistles we find a picture worthy of a place in the same volume—that of Paul the saint. It is to the greatest glory of Jesus that his life and death were instrumental in giving to the world such a character and such a life as that of Paul. The sainthood of Paul is a worthy proof of the Saviourhood of Jesus.

6. Imperialism. Paul was no Galilæan peasant but a citizen of the Roman empire. His outlook always was imperial. No other disciple or apostle at the time of his call had such a wide field opened before him. He set out to be a world conqueror. He took the world for his parish from the very beginning. He was a little man with a great soul, like John Wesley. He never was satisfied with the territories traversed or the work already done. He always planned wider itineraries and greater things. He was the incarnation of enterprise. He had a boundless ambition. His plans always outran his possibilities. He dreamed of a kingdom, world-wide and eternal. No other apostle had such an imperial program. No other apostle did so much to realize such a program. It was his imperialism which made Paul the greatest missionary the Christian Church has produced.

"He is preeminently and irresistibly dominated by the impulse of travel, which betokens the true missionary nature. It is 'ever onward' with such a temper. He has something of the insatiability of the great conqueror, whose hunger for new territories is whetted as with demoniac power by every fresh conquest. As Jesus's leading trait is the shepherd's feeling, so Paul's is the missionary impulse. Everywhere he is only on the way; he has but one thought—to

make the word speed on swiftly, while his eagerness for travel only grows with time. He scales the snowy heights of Taurus, whence he is drawn to the valleys of Lycaonia. He travels on to the Ægean, where in a vision a man of Macedonia appears to him and cries: 'Come over and help us!' He comes to Corinth, where ships sail to Italy; and straightway he writes to Rome, as always in his prayers making request, "if by any means now at length he may be prospered by the will of God to come unto them." [69] Voices across the sea call to him, 'Come'; in hours of solitude he thinks of those 'who have not heard.' This cry of 'Ever onward' is the special watchword of his life. He is led and borne everywhere by the prophetic word: 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!' [70] These words of Isaiah led him on his journeyings. Many a time he looks back with pride upon the distance he has come, and boasts that the triumphal procession in which Christ leads him through the streets of the world leaves behind it the savor of his knowledge in every place like incense." [71]

Paul founded churches wherever he went, and he established them so firmly that they all stood when he had gone. His desire was to press on into places where Christ had not been preached as yet. He would have gone everywhere as a pioneer missionary, if that had been possible to one man in one lifetime. His church imperialism and his insatiable missionary enthusiasm were born of his theological universalism. He believed that it was the will of God that all men were to be saved, and he believed that Jesus would never look upon the travail of his soul and be satisfied until

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[69] Rom. 1. 9.

[70] Rom. 10. 15; Isa. 52. 7.

[71] Hausrath, Times of the Apostles, vol. iii, p. 133.

that goal had been reached. Therefore he claimed all the nations for his Lord.

He realized that the Gentiles must be freed from the Jewish yoke before they would be tempted to come to Christ. Therefore he was the apostle of freedom from the old ordinances unto all liberty of the new life. If he were living to-day, he never would attempt to force an Occidental Christianity upon the Orient. He would leave every nation free to develop a Christianity of its own type, as long as it was true to the fundamentals of the common faith. He knew that a world-wide church could not be a church of universal uniformity. It would represent unity-in-difference —unity in essentials with widest liberty in everything else. We are just coming back in this century to the sanity and the clarity of Paul's vision in these things. The church is beginning to realize that the one church of the Christ which is to conquer the world need not be one in creed or in customs as long as it is one in loyalty to the Lord. With Paul's universalistic outlook there is of necessity something of Paul's breadth of tolerance and universal charity.

7. **Summary.** Can we form now any clear conception of this marvelous man? He was small of stature and weak in appearance but compounded all of pluck. He may have been feeble with fever at times, or he may have suffered with some chronic complaint, or he may have been subject to recurrent attacks, but nevertheless he must have had a physical fiber in him which was capable of most extraordinary endurance. As a mere physical achievement his life-work seldom has been equaled among men. The secret of his career is to be found in his indomitable soul and his complete consecration. Difficulties might multiply, friends might dissuade, everything might seem to be in opposition, and yet when Paul saw his duty clearly set before him he went straight forward without swerving.

He had something of the serene indifference to all consequences involved in his obedience to the law of his Lord

which is characteristic of the ocean tides and the stellar courses.

> And with joy the stars perform their shining
> And the sea its long moon-silvered roll;
> For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
> All the fever of some differing soul.
> Bounded by themselves and unregardful,
> In what state God's other works may be,
> In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
> These attain the mighty life you see.

When Matthew Arnold asks how his own soul may become "vast" like these, the answer given is, "Live as they." Paul lived as they, in the absoluteness of his obedience and the singleness of his devotion. Paul attained a "mighty life" because he was a man of mighty powers concentrated upon a single aim. That aim was the conversion of men to the practice of the holy life consequent upon a genuine faith in his risen and triumphant Lord. That made him the world's greatest missionary.

He was of a highly nervous temperament, capable of ecstasies and visions, and of the most tender sensibilities, capable of ardent love and fervent hate. He had as keen an intellect as Alexander. He was as courteous and gentlemanly as Julius Cæsar. He was as great a leader of men as Napoleon Bonaparte. He has done as much to mold the history of the succeeding centuries as any or all of these. He was the most original and creative mind in the early church. He was the most able and the most efficient of all the apostles. In religion and theology and practical affairs he is the most outstanding and commanding personality the Christian faith has produced.

If we knew only what he had done, we would be disposed to give him a foremost place in church and world history. If we had only his biography in the book of Acts, we would have been certain of his preeminent position for all time. However, we are more than fortunate in having Paul's

autobiography in the epistles. We not only know what he did but we have a large part of what he wrote. It is to this invaluable treasure that we turn next, for a general view of Paul's writings.

CHAPTER II

THE EPISTLES

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I. Form

1. Uniform Outline. Generally speaking, there is a uniform outline in the Pauline epistles. We have, first, the greeting which frequently sounds a keynote for the whole following discussion. This is succeeded by a thanksgiving for the progress made in the gospel graces and gifts by those to whom Paul is writing. Then comes the doctrinal portion, usually the most important and largest part of the epistle. The practical portion comes next, applying all the truths previously set forth to the problems of personal and community life. This is followed by personal messages, individual salutations, and any minor business or other details Paul may care to mention. Then the epistle ends with a brief autograph ratification of all which has been written. This is the general method of Paul's procedure, subject to modification at any point at any time, for Paul is a free spirit and refuses to be tied down to any formulas that may seem to him to hinder the free flow of his thought. There is enough uniformity in the epistles, however, to suggest this general outline: Greeting, thanksgiving, doctrine, exhortation, details, autograph signature.

2. Peculiarities in the Greetings. (1) In ancient letter-writing it was customary for the writer to put down his name first, with his official or other titles attached. It is noteworthy that, after the first two epistles, Paul calls himself an "apostle" in all but the Epistles to Philemon and to the Philippians. The Macedonian epistles are characterized with an unusual intimacy and affection, and the same

thing is true of the Epistle to Philemon. Paul did not need to emphasize his apostleship in writing to these personal friends; but in his more formal addresses to churches and church officials he is careful to insist upon his apostolic dignity. (2) In the first five epistles in the chronological order Paul addresses the "church" in Thessalonica and in Corinth and the "churches" of Galatia. (3) In the later church epistles he addresses "the saints." (4) The ordinary Greek salutation was "Joy!" The ordinary Hebrew salutation was "Peace!" Paul unites these two in the salutations of all his epistles, and in the Pastoral Epistles he adds a third term—"mercy."

3. The Four Groups. Paul's missionary career covered approximately thirty years of his life. All of the Pauline epistles in our New Testament were written in the latter half of this period. It is a strange fact that while Paul was in half his life a Pharisee and in half his life a Christian, this latter half of his life may be evenly divided in the same way by his literary activity. For fifteen years Paul wrote nothing of which we have any trace to-day. Then in fifteen years the thirteen Pauline epistles were written. It is another strange fact that these epistles fall into four groups, separated from each other by intervals of approximately five years each.

These groups are as follows: (1) Those of the second missionary journey, First and Second Thessalonians, about A. D. 53. (2) Those of the third missionary journey, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans, about A. D. 58. (3) Those of the first Roman imprisonment, Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians, about A. D. 63. (4) Those written between Paul's liberation from the first Roman imprisonment and his martyrdom, First Timothy, Titus, Second Timothy, about A. D. 67. These are only approximate dates, and the more exact time of the writing of each epistle will be determined in connection with our study of each of them; but these approximate dates

will serve to show this strange periodicity in Paul's literary career. For fifteen years he writes nothing, as far as we know. In fifteen years he writes everything we have from his pen. In a little more than one year he wrote more than half of the Pauline epistles in bulk, though not in number. All of the epistles fall into chronological groups, with approximate intervals of five years between them.

These chronological groups have their own characteristics, and they have been variously named by various authorities. One alliterative grouping is that of the Primer Epistles, the Pillar Epistles, the Prison Epistles, and the Pastoral Epistles. In their relation to the apostle's ministry these groups have been called the missionary, the evangelical, the edificatory, and the valedictory. With reference to their style or manner they have been distinguished as the didactic, the argumentative, the contemplative, and the hortatory. As to their material contents they have been classified as the eschatological, the soteriological, the Christological, and the ecclesiastical epistles.[1] These Pauline epistles form about one fourth of our New Testament. In bulk they are about equal to the Gospel according to Luke and the book of Acts combined. The writings of Paul and of the Pauline disciple, Luke, form the larger part of the contents of the New Testament.

We can be almost certain that some of the Pauline epistles have been lost. The marvel is not that that should be true, but that so many of them have been preserved. In 2 Thess. 3. 17 Paul writes that his salutation with his own hand is the token of genuineness in "every epistle," and the phrase surely would seem to imply that Paul had written to the Thessalonians more than one previous epistle. It may indicate the existence of forged epistles even at this early date, put into circulation under the assumed authority of the apostle's name. If this is not the meaning, the language

[1] See Findlay, The Epistles of Paul the Apostle, p. 247.

would seem to indicate a number of genuine epistles; and since we know of only one preceding this, we must conclude that Paul's correspondence was much larger than that which we possess. He may have written many letters to the Thessalonians and to others of which no trace has been preserved. The book of Acts mentions no one of the epistles we have. There may have been a number of others which it equally ignores and of which no mention is made in the extant epistles, and which were utterly lost at so early a period that no tradition concerning them has come down to the later day.

In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians Paul says that he would not terrify them by his letters and then he quotes from his adversaries who say, "His letters . . . are weighty and strong." [2] If these men were saying this before our Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written, they must have known of more than one epistle previously written to this church, and the plural "letters" would seem to indicate quite a number of them. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians Paul refers to some things he had written in some former epistle. "I wrote you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators." [3] Evidently, our First Corinthians was not the first epistle sent to Corinth.

If we did not have the suggestions of these passages it would be hard to believe that the total correspondence of Paul was represented by the epistles in our canon. It may be that he wrote nothing in that first fifteen years of his apostolate, but it seems almost incredible that it should be so. It may be that Paul had intervals of literary activity during the last fifteen years of his life with five year periods of inactivity intervening, but it seems most improbable. It would be altogether likely that many of the minor epistles of Paul were thrown into somebody's wastebasket shortly after their reception, and there may have been scores of these

[2] 2 Cor. 10. 9, 10.

[3] 1 Cor. 5. 9.

just as important as the Epistle to Philemon but not so fortunate in their preservation. We trust that all of the longer and more important epistles have been preserved; but who knows whether some of the Pauline correspondence which would have been deemed by us just as precious as some of that which we have may not have perished during the apostle's lifetime or shortly thereafter through accident or through carelessness or in the deliberate destruction of some persecution? We wonder that any of the brittle papyrus leaves should have survived fire and flood and all the ravages of time long enough to be copied by those who realized their imperishable value to the church and to the world.

II. Style

The style of the Pauline epistles is largely determined by the character of the man who wrote them. His personal peculiarities account for their peculiar characteristics. For this reason the epistles as a whole have been called "the autographs of Paul." He has written himself into them. His face looks out from these pages. His voice is heard in these lines. His spirit is manifest throughout.

"As a portrait painter, observing the salient and distinctive lines and contours of light and shade, and the gradations of color in an individual living human face, and reproducing these separate and varied elements upon his canvas, one by one, in a complete and consistent whole, finds he has fixed there that subtle but unmistakable attribute of the invisible spirit which we call individuality, so that even the unlearned and ignorant, looking at his handiwork, say with one accord, 'It is he!' even so, the altogether exceptional, distinctive, but mutually harmonious traits which lurk here and there in unstudied variety on well-nigh every page of these wonderful letters, leave in the average mind no suggestion of a blurred and tenuous figment of the imagination, like an idealized and artificial character in a novel or a play, but the sharp and deep impress of a living,

breathing, thinking, feeling person of flesh and blood."[4]

Paul paints his own portrait as he writes, and he does it better than anyone else can hope to do it. Shakespeare could conceal his own personality in his writing. We read his plays and we know little or nothing about him. Paul is a writer of another sort. We read his epistles and we come to know him more and more intimately with every page. He himself is visible at every turn. He is autobiographical most fully when he is so least consciously. Therefore we shall find that the characteristic features of style in these epistles correspond very exactly with the characteristics of the man.

1. **Paul's Disregard of Nature.** Paul was born in the city of Tarsus, and he grew up among the city sights and sounds. He was educated in the capital city of Jerusalem. He was on his way to the city of Damascus when he was blinded by the revelation of the risen Lord. Thereafter his apostolic career, as far as we have the record of it, was spent almost wholly in cities. Antioch, Tarsus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Jerusalem, Rome were the objective points in his missionary journeys and the central points in his life-ministry. City life is not conducive to a love of nature. Cities are built by men and are filled with artificial products. On their paved streets and between their brick walls the beauties of nature seldom are seen. Possibly it was his city training in Tarsus and in Jerusalem which had blinded Paul's eyes to all such things up to the time of that blinding revelation on the road to Damascus, and after that revelation only spiritual realities seemed worthy of note in his writing and his preaching.

Christ crucified and Christ risen was the one subject of his sermons. God spoke to him through visions and revelations and in spiritual presence and power. God never spoke to Paul through the thunder clouds and the mountain

[4] Buell, The Autographs of Saint Paul, pp. 60, 61.

heights. The birds in the air and the flowers in the field and the rippling stream and the ocean wave had no message of beauty and poetic inspiration for him. He seems to have been almost absolutely bereft or possibly devoid of any susceptibility to the natural beauties of the world around him. He was born and bred within sight of the snow-clad hills of Taurus. He sailed the blue Mediterranean again and again. He tarried long under the balmy skies and in the enchanting landscapes of Greece and Asia Minor. He saw vastly more of God's wonders by land and by sea than David or Jesus ever saw. These things made no impression upon him. They were no inspiration to him. They furnished him with no illustration even. There is much more sympathy with nature, more of poetic feeling and insight in a single psalm of David, a single prophecy of Isaiah or Amos, a single parable of our Lord than in all the epistles of Paul.

The Old Testament is full of poetry. There is an appreciation of nature's ministries and messages in the songs of Moses, Deborah, David, and Solomon. The major and the minor prophets are moved with the majesties of the heavens and the natural beauties of Palestine. Jesus was a nature lover and a poet-preacher of God's ever-present and ever-active Fatherhood as revealed in his care for all the creatures of his hand. In the market the sparrows which were sold for a farthing, and in the upper air the free birds which were fed though they did not gather into barns, spoke to him of the greater worth of human souls and the still greater solicitude of the Father for them. As he walked by the wayside and saw the field flowers clothed with more than regal beauty and yet on a day cut down and cast into the oven fire, he thought of the heavenly Father's greater care of his children and of his anxiety to supply their daily needs. When Jesus saw the vultures which gathered where a carcass would furnish a feast he thought of the invitation to speedy judgment which spiritual corruption presents. He

looked upon the fiery splendor of the morning and the evening clouds and thought of the still greater glory which the heavens would reveal at the time of the final coming of the Son of man. He delighted in mountain solitudes. He taught by the shore of the sea. With great satisfaction to his soul he walked through the harvest fields. He was happiest when he was in closest touch with nature rather than when he was in the city or the synagogue.

Alas, when we turn from the poetry of the Old Testament and from the poetry of the gospel narratives of the Christ into the book of Acts and the following epistles of Paul we find that almost every vestige of nature poetry has vanished from the sacred book. There is neither music of birds nor fragrance of flowers in the epistles of Paul. There are no mountain majesties, no cloud glories. There is no artistic, æsthetic, poetic sense of nature's marvelous beauty and life. Paul was a great apostle and a great polemic; but he was no such lover of nature as Jesus was. Possibly, it was the way he was made and the way he was brought up. It was his loss and it is our loss that so much space in our Bible has no trace of nature's ministry to man. There are flights of impassioned rhetoric in Paul's writings and there are passages of surpassing beauty of expression and sublimity of thought, but all his similes and illustrations are gathered from the manners and customs of men and suggest the courtroom, the schoolroom, the synagogue, the city rather than the freedom, the majesty, the beauty of the world outside.

Whitefield crossed the Atlantic thirteen times and traveled the length of our Atlantic seaboard again and again; and yet his sermons show no trace of anything seen or learned from the natural wonders he must have met in his travels and voyages. John Calvin lived in the midst of the grandeur of the Swiss mountains and glaciers and lakes, but his works reflect absolutely nothing of all of these. Calvin's Institutes, like Paul's epistles, might have been written by

a man who had spent his whole life in a city garret or a prison cell and never had seen spring blossoms, summer harvests, and autumn fruits, or any of nature's wonderful symphonies of color, sound, and life. Saint Bernard rode all day along the Lake of Geneva and never saw its crystal purity, its depths of blue, and the diamond flashes of the sunlight from each rippling wave. He was absorbed in his meditations—at home with his own soul. In the evening Saint Bernard asked his companions where the Lake of Geneva was.

Paul seems to have been like these men. His life was a spiritual life. His joys were of the mind and soul rather than of the sense. His interests were in the spiritual improvement of the race and not in the enjoyment of material things. His world was the world of men, the world of spiritual conflicts, the world of sinning, sorrowing, struggling humanity, the world without salvation and in starving need of salvation from sin. There was all the enchanting loveliness of the Greek sky and sea, of Olympian heights and Arcadian vales, bathed in sunshine and radiant in natural beauty everywhere. Others had seen and appreciated these things, but Paul was blind to it all. Palestine was a land of promise. Its heavens declared the glory of God and its firmament showed his handiwork. Its mountains and its hills, its fruitful trees and its cedars praised the Lord whose glory was so manifest in both heaven and earth. David had sung of these things. Jesus had enjoyed them. Paul never saw them.

The tempest swept from summit to summit of Lebanon with lightning flash and thunder roll, and then a rainbow spanned the vault of heaven for a while, and then God hung golden glories through all the evening sky. Jesus reveled in it all and praised the Father for the wonder and the majesty and the beauty of it all. Paul was reading a book or arguing with some adversary, and he did not know even that there had been a storm or a rainbow or any glories in the even-

ing sky. That was the difference between those two men. Jesus shunned Jerusalem and sought for a sunny spot on a mountainside as the preferable place for the preaching of his great sermon. He loved God's out-of-doors, and he lived in the open by night and by day. Paul sought the cities and preached by preference in the synagogue. He worked at the loom by day and he preached indoors at night. He gave himself to the study of congregations rather than of constellations. Jesus drew his illustrations from the life of nature. Paul drew his illustrations from the cities and the works of men.

He saw the costly public buildings of Corinth and the immediately adjacent hovels of the very poor, and they gave him the suggestion for one of the most beautiful figures his epistles contain, the gold, silver, and costly stones over against the wood, hay, stubble, so subject to the flames.[5] He lived for some years in the vicinity of the great temple of Artemis at Ephesus, and it gave him the conception of the far more magnificent temple of the Christian Church.[6] The arches and monuments and palaces and villas, building and built in the great cities through which he passed, gave him his metaphor of "edification" which is found so seldom in any earlier literature and which is so frequent in Paul's speech that we almost may consider it his peculiar property.[7]

He lived in the atmosphere of military conquest and domination. He found soldiers everywhere. He never got beyond the reach of their influence and presence. Whether free to roam anywhere in the vast empire or chained to a soldier and living with him day by day, he saw military companies marching and individuals standing sentinel, the representatives of war and conquest, of law and order in every place. This soldier life was forced upon his attention all his life long and we are not surprised to find

[5] 1 Cor. 3. 9–15.

[6] Eph. 1. 23; 2. 20–22.

[7] Acts 20. 32; 1 Cor. 8. 1; 14. 12.

a multitude of military metaphors in his writings. The soldier's abstinence, the continual warfare, the armor of light, the long train of the Roman triumph furnish him with many suggestions concerning the conditions and the conquests of the Christian life.[8]

The athletic metaphors of Paul are even more characteristic. Palestinian Pharisees never would have been present at the games and contests of the Greek gymnasia and national feasts; but Paul had been familiar with them since his boyhood in Tarsus and he was interested in them all his life long. He went to see them, drew many lessons from them, and made them of constant use in his teaching. In the epistles we find frequent figures taken from the gymnastic exercises, the games, the spectators, the race course, and the running. If Paul learned much from the drill-ground, the armory, and the barracks, he learned still more from the stadium, the gymnasia, and the palestra. He likens the divine life to a race course. He claims to be a good athlete in the spiritual contest. He boxes effectively. He runs lawfully and successfully. He wins the prize.[9]

These athletic metaphors must have aroused all the prejudices of some of the Jews, but Paul does not hesitate to use them on that account. Like his Master, he seemed to take some delight in saying and doing some things which shocked the ultra good people of his generation. Paul may have gone to the theater! He likens the transitoriness of this world's goods to the shifting scenes of the stage, and he compares his own life to a theater play with angels and men looking on.[10] Such figures suggest some acquaintance

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[8] Rom. 7. 23; 13. 12; 2 Cor. 2. 14–16; 6. 7; 10. 3–6; Eph. 6. 10–17; Phil. 4. 7; Col. 2. 15; 1 Thess. 5. 5–8; 2 Tim. 2. 3, 4.

[9] Acts 13. 25; 20. 24; Rom. 9. 15, 16; 1 Cor. 4. 9; 9. 24–27; Gal. 2. 2; 5. 2; Phil. 3. 12–14, 16; Col. 4. 12; 1 Thess. 2. 2; 2 Thess. 3. 1; 1 Tim. 4. 7, 8; 6. 12; 2 Tim. 2. 5; 4. 7, 8.

[10] 1 Cor. 4. 9; 7. 31.

with the Greek theater and some appreciation of its microcosmic character. The buying and selling of the market place, the transactions of the law courts, the conditions and experiences of the slave trade, all the bustle of the city streets are reflected in the epistles of Paul.[11]

Dean Howson wrote a volume on The Metaphors of Saint Paul, in which he says that "his metaphors are usually drawn, not from the operations and phenomena of the natural world, but from the activities and the outward manifestations of human life," and he compares Paul and James as follows, "The vapor, the wind, the fountain, beasts and birds and serpents, the flower of the grass, the waves of the sea, the early and the latter rain, the sun risen with a burning heat—these are like the figures of the ancient prophets, and there is more imagery of this kind in the one short epistle of James than in all the speeches and letters of Paul put together." [12]

Paul makes one reference to rain from heaven and fruitful seasons,[13] and he says something in one place about the sowing of seed as a bare grain to which God giveth another body, and in the same connection about the sun and moon and the stars differing in glory;[14] but aside from two or three incidental references of this sort he ignores all natural phenomena and confines himself to the products of civilization for the material from which his figures shall be drawn. The only time he attempts an elaborate illustration from nature he cites an artificial process which is the exact opposite of the one commonly practiced and talks about grafting a wild olive into a fruitful branch! He purposely perverted the usual process in order to make his figure more striking.[15]

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[11] Rom. 13. 8; Eph. 5. 16; Rom. 1. 14; 2. 26; 4. 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 22, 24; 2 Cor. 5. 19; 12. 6; 2 Tim. 4. 16; Rom. 6. 16–23.

[12] Howson, The Metaphors of Saint Paul, p. 131.

[13] Acts 14. 17.

[14] 1 Cor. 15. 37–41.

[15] Rom. 11. 17–24.

In the Gospels we are in the atmosphere of the Galilæan hills, filled with the scent of the flowers and the singing of the birds. In the Pauline epistles we are in the synagogues and the streets, and soldiers and slaves have taken the place of the bird songs and the field blossoms. Paul was almost, if not wholly, blind to natural beauties. He had a genius of spiritual insight but he had no eye for such things. It was better to be blind on this side of his nature than on the other.

Huxley asked Professor Haughton why he believed certain things which Huxley professed to be unable to believe. "May I speak frankly?" said Haughton. "Certainly," said Huxley. "Then," said his friend, "I do not know how it is, except that you are color-blind." Huxley was much impressed with that answer. He said: "Well, it may be so. Of course, if I were color-blind, I should not know it myself." Darwin records how in the absorption in the pursuit of purely physical science the spiritual and artistic faculties of his soul gradually atrophied and died. He says: "Disbelief crept over me at a very slow rate, but was at last complete. . . . It may be truly said that I am like a man who has become color-blind; and the universal belief by men of the existence of redness makes my present loss of perception of not the least value as evidence."

Absorption in scientific pursuits had made these men blind on the spiritual side of their natures, while Paul's absorption in spiritual things made him blind or kept him blind to all the æsthetic values of nature and art. In the midst of a world full of natural beauties Paul's spirit was untouched by them and his heart was unmoved. In the midst of a city full of the finest statuary ever produced Paul's soul was stirred within him, but it was stirred with indignation alone. To him it was only a city given over to idolatry.

It is a pity that all great men cannot have all the great qualities, but it seems to be true that greatness has its glaring deficiency as well as its patent power in most cases.

Jesus was as spiritually-minded as Paul, and he was a lover of nature as well. In that respect Paul was not like his Lord. Whether Paul was responsible for this lack in his make-up we never may know. He may have been born without æsthetic appreciations, or as in the case of Darwin, his loss of them may have been self-induced; but we recognize this disregard of nature as a real deficiency in both the character and the style of Paul.

2. **Paul's Disregard of Rules.** The Pauline epistles were not written as school compositions. Some were dashed off in a great hurry, written at white heat, composed under the stress of great excitement; and they probably were dispatched without any careful correction. Some are letters to particular friends and have no more evidence of painstaking formulation than any of our friendly letters to-day are apt to have. Others are more formal in character and are addressed to great churches, but even in these Paul is no pedagogue and no pedant. He seems comparatively careless as to the form of his sentences as long as he thinks he is able to make his thought clear. It may seem surprising to some people that there should be any bad grammar or any bad taste in the New Testament, and for the most part it is concealed in our English translations so that English readers never may suspect it; but to us it is an added evidence of the genuineness of these Pauline epistles that the impetuosity of the fiery little apostle is apparent in their intensity of tone and their disjointed structure. We see him as we read them. They represent him as he really was. We call attention to some of the facts in the case.

(1) *Coarseness.* There are a few expressions in these epistles which never were intended for polite ears. They seem a little harsh to these milder-mannered times. (*a*) We have noticed that phrase in the Epistle to the Galatians which scarcely is fit to be read in any public assembly to-day, except as it may be paraphrased into a more dubiously respectable English rendering—"I would that they . . .

would go beyond circumcision." [16] Paul's chronic intensity of feeling led him to the most extravagant expression of it upon occasion. He always was honest, but the case seemed to him a little more extreme than it would have seemed to a more phlegmatic man. (*b*) Such a man might have given up all things for Christ even as Paul did, but he would not have been likely to say of them as Paul did, "I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may gain Christ." [17]

(*c*) Other men might have been treated badly, and they might have felt the injustice of it even as Paul did, and yet they would not have thought of putting it as strongly as Paul does when he says, "We are made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things, even until now." [18] (*d*) When Paul is praising the Galatians for their treatment of him during his disability he is not content to say, "Ye did not show me the least expression of contempt," but he makes his statement concrete and as forcible as possible, and says, "Ye did not spit out at me." [19] All the vigor of a virile personality is apparent in these phrases. Paul is stirred to the depths by opposition. He feels intensely all kindness and all calumny. He is not writing calmly for the most part. He is a volcano in eruption. These lines are like streams of lava flowing down the mountainside. They scorch and burn. They have no care for green grass or the singing of birds. The old prophet had said something about substituting beauty for ashes. A volcano does just the opposite thing. Sometimes Paul was more like a volcano in action than a poet singing sweet pastorals.

(*2*) *Mixed Metaphors.* Paul has some wonderfully mixed metaphors. (*a*) He writes to the Corinthians: "We know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For verily in this we groan, long-

[16] Gal. 5. 12.
[17] Phil. 3. 8.
[18] 1 Cor. 4. 13.
[19] Gal. 4. 14.

ing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked."[20] Who ever longed to be clothed upon with a house to cover his nakedness? A man's raiment and a man's residence seem to be strangely confused here. (*b*) In the same epistle we read, "Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men; being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh."[21] Here the Corinthians are, first, Paul's epistle and then Christ's epistle. The epistles are written first on the hearts of Paul and his companions and then written on the hearts of the Corinthians to whom he writes. The metaphor is mixed but the meaning is clear to most minds. (*c*) A little farther on in the same epistle there seems to be a like confusion of thought. The veil is represented as covering the face of Moses and then the same veil is said to be covering the hearts of the children of Israel.[22] (*d*) One of the best examples of Paul's mixed metaphors is found in the Epistle to the Colossians, where he exhorts them, "As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and builded up in him, and established in your faith."[23] Walk, rooted like a tree, and built up like a house, and at the same time firmly fixed in one place!

(3) *Unfinished Sentences.* Paul sometimes begins a sentence and never finishes it. For example: (*a*) "But if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction: in order that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which he afore prepared unto glory, us whom he also called, not only from the Jews, but also from the Gentiles"[24]—what? Paul

[20] 2 Cor. 5. 1–3.
[21] 2 Cor. 3. 2, 3.
[22] 2 Cor. 3. 13–16.
[23] Col. 2. 6, 7.
[24] Rom. 9. 22–24.

never ends this conditional sentence, and he never introduces any principal sentence for it anywhere in the immediate context. He probably forgot all about it as he went on with his discussion. (*b*) Strangely enough the closing sentence in the Epistle to the Romans as it stands in our Greek texts is an incomplete one. There is more of a complete system of theology in this epistle than in any other, but the closing doxology is itself incomplete. "Now to him that is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith: to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever" [25]—what? Paul does not say. He adds only an "Amen." Did he intend to say, "to God we dedicate this epistle," or "to God we pray for your continuous salvation"? Who can tell? We know only that Paul forgot to put in any principal sentence, and left his prepositional phrase hanging in the air.

(4) *Unfinished Enumerations.* Paul sometimes begins an enumeration with a "firstly" and then forgets to add any "secondly," or to carry it any farther. (*a*) He begins his Epistle to the Romans, "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all." [26] He never says, "Second, I" do anything else. (*b*) In the third chapter of this epistle he asks, "What advantage then hath the Jew?" and he answers, "Much every way: first of all, that they were intrusted with the oracles of God." [27] He evidently intended to make a list of the advantages of the Jews, but he became interested in other things and never put down a "second" or "third." He does not get back to any such list until he

[25] Rom. 16 25–27.

[26] Rom. 1. 8.

[27] Rom. 3. 1, 2.

reaches the ninth chapter when he says of his kinsmen according to the flesh, "who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ." [28] These things may have been in Paul's mind when he wrote that "first of all" in the third chapter, and he may have intended to name them in order at that place; but his argument ran away with him and he never went on with the enumeration there begun.

(5) *Sidetracking.* It is Paul's preference to follow his thought in his dictation without much regard to his logic or the sentence formation. That is one reason why these epistles are so full of vitality. They represent Paul's thought just as it was born within him. It has not been ironed out into smoothness. It has not been put into any strait-jacket. It has all the irregularity and spontaneity of Paul's natural speech. It has been said that it is Paul's habit to "go off at a word." We would prefer to say that his active mind saw many implications at any point in his discussion, and he frequently saw fit to follow up some of these, even though his sentence or his paragraph thus became very long and unwieldy.

(*a*) Take that first sentence of the Epistle to the Romans as an example. Paul begins with his name and his titles in the ordinary form; but he does not stop there. He says that he is an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God. At that mention of the gospel he "goes off" to explain what it is. It was promised "afore through the prophets in the holy scriptures," and it is concerning his Son. At that mention of the Son he "goes off" to explain him, in the assertion of his true humanity and his proven deity. Then he comes back to his apostleship as received through his Christ.[29]

(*b*) In the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans Paul asserts that death and sin entered into the world

[28] Rom. 9. 4, 5.

[29] Rom. 1. 1–7.

through one man, and he intended to say that in the same way through one man salvation and life had been brought to the race; but in the middle of that sentence he "goes off" to explain something of the relation of death to sin, and then he falls to contrasting Adam and Christ, and only after a long parenthesis does he return to the parallel with which he began.[30]

Enough has been said to make it clear that Paul's style is not that of a pedantic precisian. It is as rapid, vehement, and intense as himself. It is as heedless of proprieties and careless of rules as any reformer or revolutionary ever would be in his conduct.

(6) *Coined Words.* Paul coins new words when he needs them, and he does not care how atrocious they may be if they seem to him to express his meaning adequately.

(*a*) For example, in the Epistle to the Ephesians we come upon the three compound words *συνκληρόνομα καὶ σύνσωμα καὶ συνμέτοχα*, which we translate "fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers."[31] Jerome translated them in the Vulgate, *"cohæredes et concorporales et comparticipes,"* and then defended these strange Latin forms by saying: "I know that in Latin it makes an ugly sentence. But because it so stands in the Greek, and because every word and syllable and stroke and point in the Divine Scriptures is full of meaning, I prefer the risks of verbal malformation to the risk of missing the sense." It sounds pious enough in Jerome; but probably he was suggesting merely that the sufficient excuse for the verbal malformations in the Latin was to be found in the verbal malformations of the Greek. If Paul could manufacture such uncouth compounds and ugly sentences Jerome could follow his illustrious example.

No one of these words occurs in classical Greek. No classical author would have thought of coining them. A

[30] Rom. 5. 12–18.

[31] Eph. 3. 6.

classicist would have regarded them as crass barbarisms. Why does the apostle Paul invent such crudities? We think that he feels compelled by the exigencies of the case. His message is more important than the rules of rhetoric. He desires at this point to make the unity of all the nations in the faith as unmistakably clear as human language can do it. If verbal compounds will suggest this unity, he will go all lengths in making them. He will break any rule, he will burst any bonds, he will disregard any propriety which hinders the free and full expression of the divine grace in Christ.

(*b*) In the next sentence we have Paul's statement, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given." [32] The word ἐλαχιστοτέρῳ, "less than the least" is a still worse verbal malformation. Prebendary Huxtable calls it "an unparalleled barbarism of grammatical inflexion," [33] and he goes on to say very rightly that our English versions have smoothed the extreme ruggedness of the word out of sight with their rendering. It is a comparative formed on a superlative—"I am *the leaster* of all the saints." It is the comparative of a superlative—"I am *the more least* of all the saints." It is a grammatical impossibility; it is a literal absurdity. If anyone is least, there can be no one more least than he. What is least can have nothing less than itself. Did Paul mean to say: "I am *unspeakably* unworthy of this high honor which has been thrust upon me. I am *inexpressibly* insignificant in myself and in comparison with my office. It is not within the power of human language as now constructed to set forth the state of the case. I feel as if I must push *beyond the bounds* of legitimate rhetoric before I reach a depth of humility proper to my position in the church"?

Here, then, are the facts of the case. Paul's style is full of awkward anacoloutha, irregular constructions,

[32] Eph. 3. 8.

[33] Expositor, II, vol. iii, p. 273.

strange forms, and all the phenomena characteristic of a nervous and highly excitable author who is more intent upon the truth of his matter than upon the formal beauty of its expression. The reasons for the style are to be found in the nature of the man.

(1) The exuberance of Paul's thought accounts for much. He had too much to say and too little time in which to say it or too little space in which to put it. His thoughts hurry each other, jostle each other, ride each other down sometimes. They do not march in orderly procession. They run and leap like rival contestants in Olympic games, like soldiers fighting their way through a narrow pass. It is not strange that there should be some confusion because of the profusion of ideas struggling for a place on the written page. It is strange how clearly the thought progresses, despite all hindrances, by sheer force of momentum. "Paul has the style of genius if he has not the genius of style." [34]

(2) It must be confessed, however, that Paul constantly betrays a degree of carelessness as to the form of his composition which shows how lightly he must have regarded it. We cannot imagine the apostle Paul pausing to polish a period! That simply would be impossible for him. He never was ambitious to pose as a model of style. There were other things which seemed so much more important to him. There are beautiful things in Paul's writings, but they are spontaneously so, not made so by study. Paul's genius made him say great things. Sometimes the very elevation of his soul made him eloquent and elegant. He has written some of the greatest passages in the world's literature. He could have ranked high as a literary master if he had chosen to do so. He had a higher mission. His writing was incidental to his missionary career. It held a very subordinate place in his thought. His interest was in the matter of his

[34] Grimm suggested that this was true of Montesquieu.

message and not in the manner of its presentation. It was the substance of the gospel which absorbed him, and he was comparatively careless as to its form.

(3) It is worth remembering in this connection that Paul was a pioneer in this field. The Pauline epistles are the earliest products of Christian literature. The Gospels and the book of Acts and the other New Testament epistles and the Apocalypse are all later in time. Paul blazed the path into a new intellectual realm. He made the road-bed for new ideas. His style is rough and rugged like that of a frontiersman. It is not polished like that of a palace courtier. Paul was a miner for new truth. His thoughts come out like nuggets of precious gold. It is original ore which we find in these epistles. The theologians of the succeeding centuries have minted this ore into current coin. Paul gave it to us in lumps and chunks.

(4) It always is possible too that any individual grammatical blunder may be the fault of the amanuensis and not of the author. Paul dictated his letters, and if he never took the trouble to revise them, some mistakes of that sort would be inevitable. We may be sure that Paul knew how to write better Greek than he sometimes did write. He was capable of correctness if he had thought it worth while. He knew the rules but he deliberately disregarded them, or, rather, he deliberately decided not to bother himself about them so long as he made his meaning clear and his message effective. Paul had been well trained both in the rules of Greek rhetoric and in the methods of the Jewish rabbis; but he was too original and too unrestrained and irrepressible to be unduly shackled by these things.

"If there had been reviewers in the days of Paul, they might have passed upon him censures without end. How careless are those unfinished sentences! What ungraceful and tedious repetitions of the same word again and again! What extraordinary confusions of metaphors! What a barbarous cilicism! What a vulgar expression! What an

obscure sentence! What a violent paradox! What a bitter taunt! If some friendly Atticist or Tarsian professor had got hold of one of the epistles to prepare it for publication, he would have made great havoc of it. We should have had whole sentences underscored, and softened down, and squared, and elaborated; graceful variations of the same term; phrases suited to the politest society; all provincialisms and irregularities removed." [35] Then they would have been anything but the epistles of Paul. They would have been classically correct, but they would have lost their characteristic features. Their individuality would have disappeared and with it most of their power over the affections and the other emotions.

"A style may be faulty, may be liable to a thousand criticisms, may be too rough or too ornate, or too indifferent to rhythm, or too neglectful of grammar, and yet may be incomparably the best style which a particular man could have used, because it sprang naturally from his character and education, and is therefore most exactly expressive of himself—of himself as the complex total result of his original temperament, and of the modifications which it has undergone from the myriads of influences for which he has shown the greatest affinity." [36]

3. **Paul the Hellenist.** There are evidences of Greek culture in Paul's style.

(1) *Use of Greek Figures of Rhetoric.* "The figures of Greek rhetoric occur in Paul far more frequently and in a far more specific way than they do in the other writers of the New Testament." [37] Farrar gives fifty examples of more than thirty figures of Greek rhetoric used by Paul, and his conclusion is "that it is far from improbable that, as a boy in Tarsus, he had attended some elementary class in rhetoric, which, indeed, may have been only a part of his education in the grammatical knowledge of the Greek lan-

[35] Farrar, in Expositor, I, vol. x, pp. 5, 6.

[36] *Idem*, p. 4. [37] *Idem*, p. 26.

guage."[37] All of which would go to show that Paul, when writing to Greeks, preferred to put his thought into forms familiar to them and therefore more likely to be acceptable to them.

We suggest some seven examples out of what might be made a much longer list of these common Greek figures of rhetoric:

(*a*) *Enumerations,* as in the attributes ascribed to Christian love,[38] and in the many methods mentioned by which Paul and the other ambassadors for Christ commended themselves as the ministers of God,[39] and in the evidences adduced to prove Paul's superiority over his adversaries,[40] and in the honor roll of those things upon which Paul would have his converts meditate.[41]

(*b*) *Antitheses,* as in the paradoxical statement, "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him,"[42] and in the strange contradictions of Paul's experience, "pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body."[43]

(*c*) *Climaxes,* as in the whole of that gem of Pauline compositions, the description of the superiority, the beauty, and the eternity of Christian love,[44] or in the enumeration of the results of the godly sorrow of the Corinthians, "what earnest care it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what longing, yea what zeal, yea what avenging!"[45]

(*d*) *Rapid interrogations,* such as, "What then shall we

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[37] Farrar, in Expositor, I, vol. x, p. 26.
[38] 1 Cor. 13. 4–8.
[39] 2 Cor. 6. 4–10.
[40] 2 Cor. 11. 22–29.
[41] Phil. 4. 8.
[42] 2 Cor. 5. 21.
[43] 2 Cor. 4. 8–10.
[44] 1 Cor. 13.
[45] 2 Cor. 7. 11.

say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Shall God that justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ Jesus that died?"[46]

(*e*) *Multiplication of synonyms,* as in the sarcastic delineation of the self-satisfaction of the Jew, "Thou bearest the name of a Jew, and restest upon the law, and gloriest in God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth,"[47] followed by that rapid fire of interrogations which we noticed under the last head: "Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou rob temples? thou who gloriest in the law, through thy transgression of the law dishonorest thou God?"[48] These two, the multiplication of synonyms and the rapid interrogation, are united again in that series of questions addressed to the Corinthians, "What fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols?"[49]

(*f*) *Oxymora.* The oxymoron is a saying which seems on the surface of it to be utterly absurd while at the same time it is a setting forth of a profound truth. Paul has many examples of the use of this form of speech. "The

[46] Rom. 8. 31–34.
[47] Rom. 2. 17–20.
[48] Rom. 2. 21–23.
[49] 2 Cor. 6. 14–16.

invisible things of him . . . are clearly seen," [50] "in haste not sluggish," [51] "their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality," [52] "when I am weak, then am I strong," [53] "living she has died," [54] "being slain, and behold we live," [55] "in much affliction with joy," [56] "to be ambitious to be quiet," [57] and the whole of the description of the armor of God in the Epistle to the Ephesians, including the sandals of the preparation of the gospel of peace.[58]

(*g*) *Paronomasia.* This is the Greek word for our English "pun." It is a play on words. Paul's use of it can be seen only in the Greek, as a matter of course; and sometimes it is impossible to reproduce the effect in English. Examples can be found in the Pauline epistles where the play on words is produced by the change of one or two letters, as in the immediate juxtaposition of two such words as *πορνεία* and *πονηρία*, or *φθόνου* and *φόνου*,[59] or *ἀσυνέτους* and *ἀσυνθέτους*.[60] The most frequent figure of rhetoric found in Paul's writing is the paronomasia dependent upon the use of words similar in sound or derivation but different in meaning, as in "*οὐκ ἐδοκίμασαν . . . ἀδόκιμον νοῦν*, they refused to have God in their knowledge and so God gave them over to a refuse mind," [61] and "wherein thou judgest, *κρίνεις*, another thou bringest in a judgment against, *κατακρίνεις*, thyself" [62] and "I say to every man that is among you not to be high-minded, *ὑπερφρονεῖν*, above what he ought to be minded, *φρονεῖν*, but to be minded, *φρονεῖν*, to be soberminded, *σωφρονεῖν*."[63]

A happy reproduction of one of Paul's puns is to be found in our version, "using the world as not abusing it

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[50] Rom. 1. 20.
[51] Rom. 12. 11.
[52] 2 Cor. 8. 2.
[53] 2 Cor. 12. 10.
[54] 1 Tim. 5. 6.
[55] 2 Cor. 6. 9.
[56] 1 Thess. 1. 6.
[57] 1 Thess. 4. 11.
[58] Eph. 6. 13–17.
[59] Rom. 1. 29.
[60] Rom. 1. 30.
[61] Rom. 1. 28.
[62] Rom. 2. 1.
[63] Rom. 12. 3.

(*χρώμενοι ὡς μὴ καταχρώμενοι*)." [64] Another is suggested in the phrases, "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God (*φιλήδονοι . . . φιλόθεοι*)." [65] One which wholly escapes the reader of the English version is to be found in Paul's description of the disorderly idlers in Thessalonica when he says of them, that they are "not busy, but busybodies (*μηδὲν ἐργαζομένους ἀλλὰ περιεργαζομένους*)." [66] Years afterward Paul repeated this play upon words in warning Timothy against the gossiping women of Ephesus, who are "not only idle, but busy in the female school of idleness (*οὐ μόνον ἀργαί ἀλλὰ καὶ . . . περίεργοι*)." [67]

Paul puns upon proper names sometimes. In the familiar letter to Philemon he rings the changes upon the name of the converted slave, Onesimus or "Profitable." He says, I beseech thee for "Profitable" who once was "unprofitable" to thee, but now is "profitable" to thee and to me, and later he adds, "Yea, brother, I would that thou were an Onesimus to me." [68] Possibly the phrase in the Epistle to the Philippians, "true yokefellow," may represent the proper name "Syzygus," and then Paul would be playing upon his name and calling him "Yokefellow by name and yokefellow by nature." [69] These examples may be sufficient to suggest that either in early life or in later years Paul had made himself acquainted with the various figures of the Greek rhetoric, and that they are more frequent in his use than in that of any other of our New Testament writers.

(2) *Influence of Thucydides.* It would be extremely interesting if we could find some one writer among the Greeks whose style had influenced the style of Paul. We never would think of instituting such a search, or even raising such a question in the case of most of the writers of the New Testament; but Paul is a Hellenist, one article of

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[64] 1 Cor. 7. 31.
[65] 2 Tim. 3. 4.
[66] 2 Thess. 3. 11.
[67] 1 Tim. 5. 13.
[68] Philem. 10, 20.
[69] Phil. 4. 3.

whose creed was, "All things are ours," whether Jewish or Greek, and it will be worth while to raise this inquiry with him. Strangely enough (or shall we say naturally enough?), we find a classical writer with that carelessness of literary polish we notice in Paul, with the same remarkable eloquence upon occasion, and with the same compressed emotion, taxing the powers of the language to express it and sometimes with volcanic energy breaking over all the barriers of grammar and rhetoric into unrestrained outflow. The style of Thucydides furnishes an astonishingly close parallel with the style of Paul. C. L. Bauer has written a book, Philologia Thucydideo-Paulina, in which he has set forth in detail this remarkable parallelism in figures of speech and manner of expression. Since his day the resemblance of style between these two men has been quite generally acknowledged. F. C. Baur has said of certain passages in Paul's writing, that they "have the true ring of Thucydides, not only in expression but in the style of thought. The genuine dialectic spirit appears in both, in the love of antithesis and contrast, rising not unfrequently to paradox. . . . With both these men the ties of natural particularism give way before the generalizing tendency of their thought, and cosmopolitanism takes the place of nationalism." [70]

This likeness of style usually has been explained by psychological resemblances in the two men and by something of similarity in their environment rather than by conscious imitation on the part of Paul. We feel sure that Paul never plagiarized, and there was too much of originality in the subject-matter of his message for him to be indebted to anyone else for the substance of his thought; and yet, in his willingness to appropriate the good in everything, he may have found much to admire in the compressed energy of Thucydides, and it surely is probable that he himself would

[70] Baur, Paul, vol. ii, p. 281.

recognize any intellectual and psychological affinity between the two as readily and as surely as the critics of our own day. If "the style of Paul more clearly resembles the style of Thucydides than that of any other great writer of antiquity," [71] the most satisfactory explanation of this fact would be that Paul was acquainted with and impressed by the style of Thucydides himself. There is nothing impossible or improbable in the supposition, and we are disposed to believe that Paul had read and appreciated and studied Thucydides and so had come to approximate and reproduce the Thucydidean style.

(3) *Influence of Demosthenes.* Possibly Paul may have read and studied other Greek authors and authorities. Like all the first evangelists Paul interpreted his commission as that of an oral witness to the truths of the gospel. An apostle was a preacher, not an author. Primarily Paul was a religious orator. For years he found no leisure for writing of any kind. He preached for fifteen years before he wrote anything, as far as we know. Thereafter he talked incessantly, and wrote only occasionally. He preached thousands of sermons while he wrote a dozen epistles. We would naturally expect, therefore, that the style of these epistles might be that of a public speaker, and that wherever opportunity afforded they might take upon themselves the character of orations, with the same direct appeals, the same carefully wrought out arguments, and the same climaxes of thought and rhetoric which must have characterized his discourses. Examples of this forensic and oratorical handling of his material will occur at once to every one familiar with his writings.

Would Paul be likely to study any model among the Greek orators to learn from him, if possible, the secrets of his persuasive power over his countrymen? If he studied any, would he not be likely to have studied the greatest among

[71] Farrar, Life and Works of Saint Paul, p. 691.

them—Demosthenes? He would have been attracted by the moral earnestness of the great Greek master of oratory, by his dependence upon the truth rather than upon any mere rhetorical artifices or arts, by the fundamental spirituality of his appeals, and by their direct reference to the consciences and the hearts of his hearers. On this plane Paul would feel that Demosthenes was at one with himself. The massiveness of reasoning, the pertinency of illustration, the mastery of the emotions characteristic of the great Athenian would appeal to Paul's admiration; and surely no writer in the New Testament has made so near an approach to Demosthenean power in these particulars as has Paul. It is not by *a priori* judgment, however, that we may come to any conclusion upon this point. It is only by a detailed study of the epistles that we can arrive at any feeling of certainty in the matter.

When we turn to these, we are surprised at the abundance of evidence which throngs in upon us. We find (*a*) the Greek orator's careful attention to proofs and illustrations and to the arrangement of them in the construction of the argument characteristic also of the writings of Paul. We find (*b*) the rhetorical forms which were favorites with Demosthenes, the rhetorical interrogation, the asseveration, the introduction of objections in the form of dialogue, in constant use by Paul. We find (*c*) the Demosthenean irony and sarcasm flashing through the epistles of Paul. We find (*d*) the same power and impressiveness of expression, (*e*) the same fervor of appeal, (*f*) the same intensity of personal conviction, and (*g*) the same fidelity to the highest endeavors and aims in both Demosthenes and Paul. If anyone suggest that all these things would be characteristic of any great soul on fire with a great cause, we answer that at all these points the parallel between Paul and Demosthenes is closer than with any other orator of ancient times. We are convinced that the parallel is with Demosthenes himself when we find (*h*) that Paul is reproducing the

phrases, the ideas, and even the construction of entire sentences found in Demosthenes.

These parallelisms have been collected by Kypke[72] and by Köster,[73] and are shown to occur in every group of Paul's epistles, from the earliest to the latest, and to be most frequent in the larger and more argumentative, and to represent just such use as we would expect in the unconscious reminiscence of a faithful student of a great master whose work was in a widely different field. Köster begins his study with the statement that "we must admit the probability that Paul has modeled the language of his epistles, to a considerable extent, upon the orations of Demosthenes," and after minute investigation of "the numerous parallelisms between the language of Demosthenes and Paul," he concludes with the assertion: "That Paul derived them all by mere accident from the conversational language of his day is incredible. He had read, and was familiar with Demosthenes, the model of Greek popular eloquence, and involuntarily appropriated many of his expressions." We would have no hesitation in saying that the appropriation might be both conscious and voluntary, for Paul would not hesitate to avail himself of any advantage of form or phrase which would give his speech or his composition readier access to the hearing and the heart of the Greek.

(4) *Influence of the Greek Poets.* Three times Paul quotes directly from the Greek poets. In writing to the Corinthians Paul quotes an Iambic trimeter from the Thais of Menander, which Menander is supposed to have quoted from Euripides.[74] In writing to Titus Paul quotes a description of the Cretans in hexameter verse probably taken from Epimenides, whom Paul declares to be "one of

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[72] Kypke. Observationes sacrae. Wratislav. 1755.

[73] Köster, Dr. Friedrich, of Stade. Studien und Kritiken. 1854. Second number.

[74] 1 Cor. 15. 33, *φθείρουσιν ἤθη χρήσθ' ὁμιλίαι κακαί.*

themselves, a prophet of their own." [75] In Paul's speech at Athens, recorded in the book of Acts, he quotes from "certain of your own poets" a line found in a Hymn to Zeus by Cleanthes and also occurring in the Phænomena of Aratus.[76]

Upon these quotations we make the following observations.

(*a*) Paul is the only writer in the New Testament who makes any direct quotations of this sort from the Greek literature.

(*b*) These quotations are all from minor poets. A man who is so well acquainted with the minor poets of any literature as to be able to quote from them aptly and offhand will not be likely to be ignorant of the more important poets of that literature. If he read Menander, he would read Euripides. If he read Epimenides, he would read Aristophanes. If he read Aratus, he would read Æschylus.

(*c*) The aptness of these quotations to the subject in hand would seem to prove that they are far from being accidental acquisitions on the part of Paul, and would rather evidence a wide acquaintance with the literature from which they so aptly are chosen.

(*d*) "That the apostle was able to quote a Cretan poet in writing to one who was ministering in Crete, and Stoic poets in addressing an audience largely composed of adherents of that philosophical school, may fairly be set down as a hint of a more extended acquaintance on his part with the classics than the actual number of the citations would lead us to infer." [77]

(*e*) It is a curious fact that one of these quotations represents both Menander and Euripides and another represents both Aratus and Cleanthes; and when Paul asserts his knowledge of the latter fact by the use of the plural, "as certain of your own *poets* have said," the quotation of lines

[75] Titus 1. 12, Κρῆτες ἀεὶ ψεῦσται, κακὰ θηρία, γαστέρες ἀργαί.

[76] Acts 17. 28, Τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν.

[77] Edgar C. S. Gibson, Expositor, II, iv, pp. 344, 345.

which have a double authority behind them would seem to be evidence of the careful investigation of a student rather than the chance phrase of a superficial acquaintance.

(*f*) To say that Paul picked up these phrases on the street and that he used the plural instead of the singular by mere accident, and that in his Athenian speech he followed the line of thought in the poem of Aratus without knowing it, is to present nothing but assertions, and the most absurd assertions in the face of positive evidence that Paul had a degree of acquaintance with Greek literature not found in any other writer of the New Testament and that he makes a masterly use of that literature at just those points where he had need of it. Because of the character and aim of his writings there was little room for quotations of this sort. Those given are only suggestions of the use Paul might have made of the Greek poets had occasion required. His study of them was one of the elements which entered into the formation of his style.

(5) *Influence of Greek Philosophy.* (*a*) Stoicism. The university at Tarsus was dominated by the influence of the Stoical philosophers in the time of Paul. The most influential teacher in the city was the Stoic Athenodorus. A long line of illustrious Stoics had preceded him, and he and his colleagues were recognized as the chief authorities in the intellectual realm in the vicinity in which Paul grew up. Early in life Paul became familiar with their modes of thought and ideals of conduct and character. Sir William Ramsay declares of a certain quality in the Pauline thought, "It seems to me wholly inconceivable in a mere narrow Hebrew, and wholly inexplicable without an education in Greek philosophy," [78] and he finds the traces of the same quality in the few fragments from Athenodorus which have come down to us.

How familiar Paul was with the tenets of the prevalent

[78] The Cities of Paul, p. 34.

Stoical philosophy is apparent in the speech made before the Stoics and Epicureans at Athens.[79] In this address, as in the later speech before the Sadducees and the Pharisees in the council chamber at Jerusalem, Paul chose to ally himself squarely with the one school as against the other. (a) His first sentence struck directly at the Epicurean theory of the origin of the world by the fortuitous concourse of atoms and arrayed him with the Stoics in their doctrine of the Divine Wisdom and Providence creating and ruling all things. (b) Paul went on to say, "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands." Seneca, the most prominent contemporary representative of Stoicism, had put their doctrine into these words, "The whole world is the temple of the immortal gods," [80] and "Temples are not to be built to God of stones piled on high. He must be consecrated in the heart of every man." [81] (c) Paul said, "Neither is God served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." Seneca put the same truth in this form: "God wants not ministers. How so? He himself ministereth to the human race." [82] (d) Paul said, "God made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth." Seneca agrees, "We are members of a vast body. Nature made us kin, when she produced us from the same things and to the same ends." [83] (e) Paul said, "God is not far from each one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being." Seneca wrote, "God is at hand everywhere and to all men." [82] and again, "God is near thee; he is with thee; he is within." [84] (f) Paul quoted as a proof passage acceptable and conclusive to his audience from the Hymn of Cleanthes the Stoic, which Bishop Lightfoot says is "the noblest expression of heathen devotion which Greek literature has

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[79] Acts 17. 24–29.
[80] De Benef., vii, 7.
[81] Frag. 123, in Lactant. Div. Inst., vi, 25.
[82] Ep. Mor., xcv, 47.
[83] Ep. Mor., xcv, 52.
[84] Ep. Mor., xli, 1.

preserved to us," [85] and also from the Phænomena of Aratus, another Stoic poet and philosopher and Paul's fellow countryman, that famous line which recognized the Divine Fatherhood and emphasized the universal brotherhood, "For we are also his offspring." (g) Then Paul proceeded, "Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think the godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art or device of men." Seneca parallels the thought again: "Thou shalt not form him of silver and gold: a true likeness of God cannot be molded of this material." [86]

Bishop Lightfoot says that in this speech Paul "shows a clear appreciation of the elements of truth contained in their philosophy and a studied coincidence with their modes of expression." [87] Lewin declares: "They would hardly have condescended to discuss such high matters with him had he not been capable of doing battle with them upon their own ground. He must, therefore, have been familiar with the doctrines of both schools." [88] Step by step Paul had reproduced the philosophical faith of the Stoics in their own phrases and forms. There are but six verses in the book of Acts, giving us an abstract or a summary of Paul's prelude to his discourse on the resurrection, but they are filled with parallels to the Stoical philosophy and they include an explicit quotation from the Stoical poetry; and no evidence could be clearer than that which these verses give to Paul's conscious appropriation of the Greek philosophy and his purpose to make the most of it as an introduction to his higher truth.

Such a thoroughgoing appreciation of certain elements in the Stoic thought must have left some trace of itself in the Pauline writings. If we look for parallels in the epistles we have no trouble in finding them. Lightfoot gives a long list of them,[89] occurring in First Corinthians, Second

[85] Dissertations on the Apostolic Age, p. 288.
[86] Ep. Mor., xxi, 11.
[87] Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 288.
[88] Lewin, Life of Paul, p. 12.
[89] *Op. cit.*, pp. 270–272, 289–293.

Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, First Timothy, Titus, and Second Timothy; and after making all allowances for fallacious coincidences, uncertain priority, and so on, in his summary of results, he says, "Paul found in the ethical language of the Stoics expressions more fit than he could find elsewhere to describe in certain aspects the duties and privileges, the struggles and the triumphs of the Christian life." [90] Bishop Gore in his commentary discussion of the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans says, "What Paul teaches about the moral consciousness, and possibility of moral goodness, among the Gentiles has not a Jewish sound at all. The Jewish teachers generally would not have admitted any goodness acceptable to God in the heathen world. In fact, Paul is here accepting the principle of a universal presence and operation of God in the human heart, outside the limit of any special revelation, and he accepts it in terms largely derived from current Stoic philosophy." [91]

There are fundamental differences between Stoic and Christian thought. Paul knew that as well as anyone; but he continually adopted Stoic phraseology as far as he found it available for the ends he had in view. What was true of the Stoical philosophy was equally true of other philosophical schools. Lewin suggests rightly, "The contemplative turn of Paul's mind would lead him naturally to study the philosophy of the Greeks generally." [92] The knowledge of one system of philosophy, therefore, almost of necessity would imply an understanding of its predecessors, furnishing the foundation upon which it had built. Have we any evidence that Paul's style or his thought was influenced at any point by the great Greek masters in this field? We think we have. We will look at Aristotle first for a moment.

[90] Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

[91] Gore, The Epistle to the Romans, p. 99.

[92] Lewin, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

(*b*) Aristotle. We find Aristotle saying of men eminent for wisdom and virtue, "Against such there is no law, for they themselves are a law," [93] and of the real gentleman, "He will bear himself thus, as being a law unto himself." [94] In one of Paul's epistles we find the first clause repeated word for word,[95] and in another epistle the thought of the second passage is exactly reproduced.[96] Such close coincidences are likely to have been copied consciously.

The greatest of the Greek philosophers was Plato, and we would expect to find traces of his influence upon Paul.

(*c*) Plato. (a) Had Paul read in Plato, "But such as are true racers, arriving at the end, both receive the prizes and are crowned"? [97] Did the memory of Plato's phrases as well as the sight of the Greek festivals suggest his repeated figures from the race-course? [98] (b) Had he read in Plato, "Shall we not agree, that as to the man who is beloved of the gods whatever comes to him from the gods will all be the best possible?" [99] and had he immediately appropriated this sentiment as expressing the triumph of Christian and monotheistic faith? [100] (c) We wonder as we read Paul's epistles if he had not read in his Plato that "Love is the fairest and the best in himself, and the cause of what is fairest and best in all other things," [101] or (d) "He who has lived as a true philosopher has reason to be of good cheer when he is about to die, and after death he may hope to receive the greatest good in the other world," [102] or (e) "There is a victory and defeat—the first and best of victories, the lowest and worst of defeats—which each man gains or sustains at the hands not of another, but of himself; this shows that there is a war

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[93] Politics, III, xiii, 14.
[94] Nic. Eth., IV, viii.
[95] Gal. 5. 23.
[96] Rom. 2. 14.
[97] Rep., 10, 613.
[98] 1 Cor. 9. 24; 2 Tim. 4. 7, etc.
[99] Rep., 10, 612.
[100] Rom. 8. 28.
[101] Conv., 197; compare 1 Cor. 13.
[102] Phaed., 64; compare 2 Cor. 5. 8; Phil. 1. 23; 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.

against ourselves going on in every individual of us."[103] (f) He could have read in Plato that vivid description of those gluttonous and intemperate souls whose belly was their God.[104] (g) He could have learned from Plato that to be carnally-minded was death.[105] (h) Plato would have pictured for him the truth that the God of this world blindeth the eyes of his votaries, and Paul never could have forgotten the picture when he had once read it.[106] Eusebius tells us that Plato had attained the porch of Christian truth.[107] Justin Martyr said, "The Platonic dogmas are not foreign to Christianity." Paul would be quick to perceive this and glad to acknowledge it. We have suggested only a few possibilities of Platonic influence upon Paul's phraseology and thought. Many more could be adduced.

(*d*) Philosophical Terms. The Pauline attitude of appreciation for all that was good in the Greek philosophy is shown not only in the quotation of sentences and the appropriation of truths and the parallelisms of thought but also in the adoption of characteristic terms in the philosophical vocabulary. The best example is the word *συνείδησις*, "conscience." Cramer says in his lexicon that "both the expression and the fully correspondent idea are foreign to the Old Testament." Only one instance has been found of the use of this word in an ethical sense in either the Septuagint or the Apocrypha. No writer in the New Testament has used it as Paul does except Peter in his epistle, which at so many points shows a dependence upon Pauline language and thought. The word was adopted and used first by Paul. In his speeches in the book of Acts and in his epistles it is found to occur twenty-two times.

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[103] Laws., 626; compare Rom. 7. 22; Gal. 5. 17.

[104] Rep., 9, 586; compare Phil. 3. 19.

[105] Phaed., 69 and 81; compare Rom. 8. 5; Gal. 6. 8.

[106] Theaet., 176; Rep., 7, 514; compare 2 Cor. 4. 4; Gal. 6. 7.

[107] Praep. Evang., 13, 14.

He got the word neither from the Old Testament nor from his Jewish contemporaries. It was a term in current use among the Stoics. It represented to them the inner consciousness of the Divine Law. It was worthy of consecration to the cause of Christ. Paul adopted it, deepened its meaning, and introduced it into the vocabulary of the Christian Church.

Another example of Paul's appropriation of favorite and characteristic terms from the Greek philosophy is found in the word *αὐτάρκεια*. This word had been used by Aristotle, but it was current in Paul's day as representing one of the fundamental notions of the Stoic school. The ideal man of the Stoic philosophers was both contented and self-sufficient. He would want nothing belonging to others. Within himself he would possess all things. Paul appropriated this ideal for the Christian life, and he claimed to realize it in his own experience. He said of himself and other Christians: "We have nothing and yet possess all things. . . . In everything, at every time we have all self-sufficiency (*αὐτάρκειαν*) . . . in everything being enriched. We have learned, in whatever circumstances we may be, to be content (*αὐτάρκης*). We have all things, full and overflowing." [108] The Stoic's term had been accepted without hesitation, and its conception glorified by the sufficiency furnished in Christ.

Other ethical terms taken from the current use of the philosophical schools are found in the Pauline epistles, such as *ἐπιείκεια, πραότης*, and others. Other terms are disapproved by Paul, such as *ἀρετή* and *ἡδονή*. He uses these only to brand them as unworthy of comparison with Christian ideals. Both his selection and rejection bear witness to the influence of this current philosophical phraseology upon Paul's style.

(6) *Incarnation of the Greek Spirit.* Krenkel believes

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[108] 2 Cor. 6. 10; 2 Cor. 9. 8, 11; Phil. 4. 11, 18.

that the spirit of "entirely genuine Attic urbanity" characterizes both Paul and his writings. The proper appreciation of such a statement must be reserved for those who have a thoroughgoing knowledge of the whole of Greek literature and life. It is noteworthy, however, that those who are most thoroughly at home in this field are most impressed with this fact. Such men as Ernst Curtius, Canon Hicks, and Sir William Ramsay are ready to agree that Paul had "that ready versatility, that social courtesy, that large comprehensiveness, that wide experience and capacity for dealing with varied interests and intricate matters of business which made him an ideal specimen of what the Greeks would call a true gentleman, *καλὸς κἀγαθός*, fair and good, a spirit more flexible and more charming than natural Semitic dignity."[109] "Coleridge was struck by the fact that Paul had the courteous grace and refinement of a Lancelot. Of the Knights of the Table Round who founded the great order of Christian chivalry, Paul was the most nobly mannered man of all."[110] This spirit Paul caught from the Greeks. It affected his conduct and it influenced his style.

John Kelman, speaking of the influence of the Greek spirit upon Paul, says: "A culture affects the minds of men far more by its atmosphere, its delicate play of feeling, its subtle spiritual appeal to one's tastes and inclinations. Of such influence we find abundant evidence in Paul. . . . He saw how godlike the ideals of Greece had been, how powerful for God they must ever be, if they are kept alive and pure. He was far too wise a man not to utilize such a spirit; and he did utilize it. . . . He revived in his Christian teaching much that was best and most appealing in that wonderful life that seemed to have fallen upon so hard a destiny. . . . Must there not have been many who felt that the old Greek spirit had found true voice at

[109] Farrar, *op. cit.*, p. 698.

[110] Kellet, Expositor, VI, ix, 340.

last" [111] in these epistles as well as in the sermons of Paul? The best of the Greek spirit permeated Paul's life and letters as they did not in the case of any other Jew in history. He brought into the gospel the Greek grace and gladness and liberty and courtesy and devotion to the ideal which gives it imperishable charm. He was the only one among the apostles who was qualified by birth and early environment and later education to give to the Greek-speaking world of that day the revelation of the beauty and liberty and universality which was inherent in the teachings of Jesus.

As Moses was skilled in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and thus was prepared to become the great lawgiver of his people, Paul was familiar with all the wisdom of his time, and thus was able to give to the Christian Church a breadth and general culture characteristic of the Greek rather than of the Jew and to free it from the bondage to the letter and to give it all the liberty of the spirit which the greatest of the world's thinkers among the Greeks had enjoyed and in this way to fit it for the conquest of all the peoples for the Christ.

(7) *Language and Vocabulary.* The Pauline Greek is considered the most typical form of Hellenistic Greek in the New Testament. Paul composed in Greek. There is no evidence that he thought in Hebrew and translated his thought as he dictated these letters. We may say truly that Paul created the theological vocabulary of the Christian Church in a great measure. He made a new speech for the new faith. He made use of the old Hebrew and Greek words and ideas as far as he found them adequate and serviceable; but when they failed him he coined new words and introduced new formulæ, words like *κυριακός* and phrases like *ἐν χριστῷ*. He gave new meanings to old words and he stamped his meaning upon the most char-

[111] Expository Times, xii, 515, 516.

acteristic words of the Christian faith, such as "righteousness," "justification," "faith," "love," "flesh," "spirit," "redemption," "propitiation," "reconciliation," "grace," "mercy, "peace." Of the four thousand six hundred and ninety-eight words which make up the New Testament vocabulary five hundred and ninety-seven, or more than one-tenth, are used by Paul alone.

4. Paul the Rabbi. Whatever influence the Greek culture and thought may have had on Paul, we must not forget the fact that he was born a Jew and trained a Jew. The Hellenist Jew was different from the Palestinian Jew, but he still was a Jew. He may have been emancipated from some of the narrowness and provincialism of his brethren in the little home land, but he never was emancipated from his racial characteristics. He lived and died a Jew. Paul may have brought from Tarsus to the school of Gamaliel in Jerusalem a liking for Greek letters and an appreciation for Greek ideals and life, but he carried from the school of Gamaliel in Jerusalem a training as a Jewish rabbi from which he never could have wholly freed himself even had he so desired. There is not a page in Paul's epistles which does not bear the stamp of his Jewish antecedents. No one but a Jew either would have thought or could have written such discussions as we find in them.

It goes without saying that Jewish phrases and expressions are to be found everywhere in Paul's writings.

(1) The rabbinical theology is apparent occasionally and the rabbinical ideas and methods of argument sometimes are followed quite after the models of the rabbinical schools. We cite the best examples:

(*a*) There is the allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament story of Sarah and Isaac, on the one hand, and Hagar and Ishmael, on the other hand, in which Ishmael is made to represent the law and Isaac the gospel, and the two women are the two covenants, and Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to the Jerusalem that was

then, while Sarah answers to the spiritual Jerusalem which is free.[112] The whole paragraph seems to the Occidental mind to be fantastic and rabbinic, but it was quite after the manner to which Paul had been accustomed in his schoolroom and synagogue days.

(*b*) In the same Epistle to the Galatians Paul suggests that the promise was made to Abraham and to his seed. He calls attention to the fact that the word "seed" is singular and not plural, and argues on that basis that the fulfillment of the promise is to be found only in one, namely, Christ.[113] The word could not have been plural, either in the original Septuagint Greek or the Hebrew; but such a grammatical quibble would seem perfectly justifiable as a basis for a theological conclusion to Paul's rabbinical contemporaries.

(*c*) In the Epistle to the Ephesians[114] Paul quotes from a psalm which pictured Jehovah as a conqueror making his solemn entry into Zion with many captives in his train and receiving gifts from vanquished foes. Paul interprets the passage as descriptive of Christ, and he quotes the psalm not as it read in the original but as it was paraphrased and perverted by the Jews and is found in the Targum and the Peshito to-day, in a form familiar to his mind from the discussions of it in the schools; and he represents Christ as the dispenser of royal bounties rather than the receiver of homage and oblations. He does not say that he received gifts from men, but that he gave gifts to men. He probably did not have the Hebrew text by him when he quoted, but he dictated the words as he remembered them in the speech of the rabbis of his day.

(*2*) A still more patent proof of the influence of his rabbinical training is to be found in Paul's references to the traditions and legends of the Jews. These things were not

[112] Gal. 4. 21–31.
[113] Gal. 3. 16.
[114] Eph. 4. 8.

found in the Scriptures. Paul got them from the home and the school. The most noticeable of these are as follows:

(*a*) "Even as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also withstand the truth." [115] These proper names, "Jannes" and "Jambres," are not found in the Old Testament narrative. They must have been taken from current Jewish tradition. In all probability the names are not the right ones, for it would be strange indeed and almost inconceivable that the correct names for these individuals should have been preserved through all the centuries without being recorded. Then, too, these names are not Egyptian but Jewish, and their meanings, "The Seducer" and "The Rebel," would suggest that they were names imposed upon these men by their enemies rather than the ones they originally bore.

(*b*) "They drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ." [116] The reference here is to the tradition of the Jews that the rock from which water flowed for the refreshment of the Israelites in the wilderness was a round stone which rolled after the tribes on their journeyings and when they halted came and settled itself in the court of the Tent of Meeting; and when the princes came and stood beside it and said, "Spring up, O well!" the waters gushed out from it again. The legend is incredible, of course, and Paul does not sanction it or guarantee its truthfulness. He does allude to it, and give a spiritual interpretation to its fantastic suggestion.

(*c*) "The law was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator." [117] If this is true, it is not stated in the Old Testament. It rests upon Jewish tradition as its only authority. Paul had heard Stephen make the same statement in his defense before his martyrdom. It was a matter

[115] 2 Tim. 3. 8.
[116] 1 Cor. 10. 4.
[117] Gal. 3. 19.

of common belief among the Jews of that day. It may have rested upon the Septuagint text, but it had no warrant in the Hebrew.

(*d*) "For this cause ought the woman to have a sign of authority upon her head, because of the angels."[118] It usually is supposed that Tertullian was right in saying that Paul prescribed the veiling of women "because of the evil angels, of whom we read that they fell from God and from heaven on account of lust."[119] This notion is found again and again in the Talmud and was one of the familiar Hagadoth in the days of Paul.

(3) On these remnants of rabbinical learning and lore which we find in the epistles of Paul we offer the following suggestions:

(*a*) Considering Paul's Jewish training at Tarsus and at Jerusalem, it is most surprising that he does not show more traces of rabbinism in his writings than he does. We might have expected his pages to be filled with allegorical interpretations and Talmudic traditions. When we compare his epistles with the writings and sayings of any of the contemporary rabbis the immeasurable superiority of the compositions of Paul is apparent at once. Paul's experience as a Christian seems to have lifted him above the old methods and freed him in a most astonishing measure from the old puerilities. That there are very occasional reminiscences of these things is not surprising. It is a marvel in our eyes that they are so few.

(*b*) The validity of Paul's conclusions never depends upon his allusions to the traditions or upon any allegorical interpretation. As Luther said, "These are only the painting of the house, after it has been built." They are appended as ornaments, not adduced as foundation stones.

(*c*) Paul does not allegorize any historical narrative into thin air. He recognizes the fact and then makes it the type

[118] 1 Cor. 11. 10.

[119] De Virg., 7.

of spiritual experience. Such a use of the imagination in finding parallels between historical and spiritual facts seems to us altogether legitimate and praiseworthy. It is in no danger of misunderstanding. It may be very useful in fastening the truth upon the heart and mind.

(*d*) Paul's allusions to legends not contained in the Old Testament scriptures are only incidental and illustrative. He never vouches for their truth. They have no objective or inherent value to him.

(*e*) Paul was at the farthest remove from the typical rabbis of his day in his thinking and his reasoning. Talbot W. Chambers was right in saying that Paul was not "narrow in his views, a bigot for prejudice, fanciful in interpretation, and hair-splitting in casuistry. Nothing can be farther from the truth. A gulf as deep as Gehenna divides Paul from the Kabbalists. He never sticks fast in the letter, nor soars into imaginary symbolism. He does not magnify trifles, or give up substance in pursuit of form. Nor is his reasoning sophistical or barren, but fair, manly, and conclusive. He discusses the highest topics man can consider, and in a tone and with a weight proportioned to their importance. . . . Everything in matter and manner and spirit is large and comprehensive—in keeping with the magnificent fullness and grace of the salvation he has to set forth." [120]

The transformation of Saul the Pharisee into Paul the apostle is one of the miracles of world history; but it is not a whit more marvelous than the almost complete emancipation of the writer of these epistles from the rabbinical training of his youth. No man can break absolutely with his past. We find scattered traces of Paul's training here and there in his writings which we think he might have discarded with the rest. Possibly there is more of Jewish theology in these epistles than is generally recognized. We

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[120] Homiletic Review, ix, 120.

do not discuss that matter here. The thing which impresses us most is that Paul is so free from that which was waxing old in theology and reasoning and which was ready to vanish away while with a genius unparalleled in the church he laid the foundations of a new theology destined to capture the mind and the heart of the world, some features of which all the centuries following scarcely have appreciated as they ought, and some of which are ideals to be realized in the yet future development of Christian life and thought. Paul was a pioneer and a prophet. In some respects we are lagging behind him still.

5. Paul the Advocate. There is one more thing we would like to say about the style of Paul. It is the style of an advocate. Paul was the advocate of Christianity before the bar of the world. He presents its case and he pleads its cause with a legal ability which won a favorable verdict from the very first. Paul was more of a lawyer than a scribe. He delights in legal phraseology. Much of his theology is put into a legalistic form. He was supremely interested as a Pharisee in finding some way to insure the perfect keeping of the law. His chief conviction in connection with Christianity is that that secret has been discovered in Jesus.

As a Roman citizen he had some acquaintance with the Roman law. "There is in some parts of his teaching a direct application of Roman legal principles in illustration of his doctrine, which none but a Roman could be expected so to apply, none unless versed in Roman law would be able to employ." [121] The best instance in point is the presentation of our relation of sonship to God under the figure of adoption which was essentially a Roman and not a Jewish legal procedure. Some think that Paul coined the word for "adoption" in our New Testament, since it is not found in any earlier Greek writer. It would be strange if the

[121] Dean Merivale, The Conversion of the Roman Empire, p. 81.

word *νιοθεσία* had not been used before Paul's time as the nearest equivalent to the Latin *adoptio*.

However, it is the Jewish law with which Paul was most familiar and to which he makes most frequent reference. He had a natural liking for the law courts and a constitutionally legal temperament. Paul was a prince of advocates. His logic is merciless. He never leaves an opponent until he has made it clear to a demonstration that the truth is the very opposite of that which he had affirmed. How the Jews must have dreaded him in those synagogue debates of which we read in the book of Acts, and how fervently they must have hated him for the very clarity and unanswerableness of his argument when they were not willing to be convinced! Godet says of Paul that he has a "dialectical rigor which will not quit a subject till after having completely analyzed it, nor an adversary till it has transfixed him with its own sword." [122] That is never pleasant for the man on the wrong side in a debate.

Paul never is so careful of the feelings of an opponent as to sacrifice or to soften the plainest and most forcible putting of the truth. His interest never fails. His energy never palls. "He writes not only as supporting a certain doctrine, but as defending it against another and hostile one; and not only so, but as defending it against that other represented, as it were, in the person of a vigorous, earnest, alert, and wily adversary. He feels the necessity, evidently, which belongs to such a position, of massing and strengthening his proofs everywhere; of guarding himself against suggestions which might arise at any point; of meeting the great difficulties of the subject; of showing that his doctrine was not contradictory to God's promises or his covenant. . . . With all the enthusiasm of his nature he was committed to the grand idea which had been revealed to him from heaven. He threw himself with the ardor of a

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[122] Commentary on Romans, p. 35.

soldier into the conflict for its support. He bent every energy of his being to secure for it the victory, which was to his mind the victory of the kingdom of God. . . . How far he was from the philosophic calmness of the schools and the teacher who, quietly and without emotion, arranges his system of thought in its divisions and subdivisions! He was a combatant, an advocate, a preacher. He was contending for one grand idea, earnest to prove its truth, on fire in his inmost soul with the love of it, striving from the first word to the last of his whole discussion to persuade his readers to accept it, and to realize in themselves its life-giving power." [123]

He sweeps everything before him. He argues, entreats, exhorts, proves, pleads with irresistible fervor and irrepressible faith. The style of these epistles is that of a debater and an advocate. Doubtless the substance of many of them is repeated from the oral discourses of the apostle. He has argued these questions out with many an individual and before many a congregation. He knows the objections usually offered. He is acquainted with all the twists and turns of ordinary debate on these subjects. He puts into writing the products of his preaching and apologetic and evangelistic experience. The epistles are not polished orations nor didactic treatises. They are full of the give and take of ordinary conversation and the parry and thrust of continuous debate.

Yet the wonder of it all is that they never lose themselves in petty details, but always come out upon the heights of a supreme conclusion. That marks Paul as not only one of the great debaters but also one of the great thinkers of world literature. Sabatier says of him, "He ranks with Plato, with Augustine and Calvin, with Schleiermacher, Spinoza, Hegel. An imperious necessity impelled him to give his belief full dialectic expression, and to raise it above

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[123] Timothy Dwight, in Homiletic Review, ix, pp. 7, 8, 12.

its contradictories. Having affirmed it, he confronts it at once with its opposite; and his faith is incomplete until he has triumphed over this antithesis and reached a point of higher unity." [124] Many people cannot follow to these heights.

We can understand something of the mingled bewilderment and appreciation which the great scholars of the church have felt as they studied the style of the apostle Paul. We append some of their estimates as an aid to our own.

6. Estimates of Paul's Style. (1) The earliest statement on the subject which we have is found in the so-called Second Epistle of Peter. It is interesting to note that inside our New Testament canon there is an estimate of Paul's style. It reads, "Account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." [125]

(2) Origen, the greatest of the Greek Fathers, says: "The apostle is like a person who leads a stranger into a magnificent palace but perplexed with various cross and intricate passages and many remote and secret apartments. He shows him some things at a distance, out of his opulent treasury; brings some things near to his view, conceals others from it, often enters in at one door and comes out at another; so that the stranger is surprised and wonders whence he came, where he is, and how he shall get out."

(3) Jerome, the greatest scholar among the Latin Fathers, in his letter to Pammachius, says: "I will only mention the apostle Paul, whose words seem to me, as often as I hear them, to be not words, but peals of thunder.

[124] Sabatier, The Apostle Paul, p. 89.

[125] 2 Pet. 3. 15, 16.

Read his epistles, and especially those addressed to the Romans, to the Galatians, and to the Ephesians, in all of which he stands in the thick of the battle, and you will see how skillful and how careful he is in the proofs which he draws from the Old Testament, and how warily he cloaks the object which he has in view. His words seem simplicity itself—the expressions of a guileless and unsophisticated person, one who has no skill either to plan a dilemma or to avoid it. Still, whichever way you look, they are thunderbolts. His pleading halts, yet he carries every point which he takes up. He turns his back upon his foe only to overcome him; he simulates flight, but only that he may slay." [126]

(4) Luther says of Paul, "*Paulus meras flammas loquitur* —Paul speaks mere flames." [127]

(5) Erasmus repeats, "He thunders, he lightnings, he speaks mere flames." [128]

(6) Casaubon says, "Paul alone of all the writers seems to me not to have written with his fingers, with pen and ink, but with the heart itself, the affection itself, and with naked nerves." [129]

(7) Tholuck writes, "The style of Paul is forcible, brief, rapid, abounding in sentences in which he seems to be always laboring for some new expression still stronger than the preceding, and the words press like waves upon each other."

(8) Renan in his own graphic style declares of Paul's letters: "The language is, if I may venture to say it, pulverized—not a single consecutive phrase. It is impossible to violate more audaciously, I say not the genius of the Greek language, but the logic of human speech. One might describe it as a rapid conversation stenographed and reproduced without corrections." [130]

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[126] Ep. ad Pammach., 68, 13.
[127] In Gal. 1.
[128] Ad Col. 4. 16.
[129] Adversaria, ap. Wolf., p. 135.
[130] St. Paul, p. 232.

To Here

(9) Philip Schaff describes the style of Paul as follows: "It is manly, bold, heroic, aggressive, and warlike; yet at times tender, delicate, gentle, and winning. It is involved, irregular, and rugged, but always forcible and expressive, and not seldom rises to more than poetic beauty. . . . He abounds in skillful arguments, bold antitheses, impetuous assaults, abrupt transitions, sudden turns, zigzag flashes, startling questions and exclamations. . . . He drives the opponent to the wall without mercy and reduces him *ad absurdum,* but without ever indulging in personalities. . . . His terseness makes him at times obscure, as is the case with the somewhat similar style of Thucydides, Tacitus, and Tertullian. His words are as many warriors marching on to victory and peace; they are like a mountain torrent rushing in foaming rapids over precipices, and then calmly flowing through green meadows, or like a thunderstorm ending in a refreshing shower and bright sunshine." [131]

(10) Reuss says: "The style of all these epistles is the true expression of the personality of the author. The defect of classical correctness and rhetorical finish is more than compensated by the riches of language and the fullness of expression. The condensation of construction demands not reading simply, but studying. Broken sentences, ellipses, parentheses, leaps in the argumentation, allegories, rhetorical figures express inimitably all the moods of a wide-awake and cultured mind, all the affections of a rich and deep heart, and betray everywhere a pen at once bold, and yet too slow for the thought. Antitheses, climaxes, exclamations, questions keep up the attention, and touching effusions win the heart of the reader." [132]

(11) Pressensé agrees: "Paul's own moral life struggled for expression in his doctrine; and to give utterance to both at once, Paul created a marvelous language, rough and incorrect, but full of resource and invention, following his

[131] Schaff, History of the Christian Church, vol. i, pp. 753–4.

[132] Geschichte der h. Schr. N. T., vol. i, p. 67.

rapid leaps of thought, and bending to his sudden and sharp transitions. His ideas . . . intermingle in seeming confusion; but the confusion is seeming only, for through it all a powerful argument steadily sustains the mastery. The tongue of Paul is, indeed, a tongue of fire." [133] There is sufficient agreement among these statements to verify our own conclusions concerning the style of Paul and to establish the direct and unmistakable relation between Paul's style and his own character. We add one more estimate in further confirmation of both these facts.

(12) Farrar concludes: "All that has been written of the peculiarities of Paul's style may, I think, be summed up in two words—intense individuality. His style is himself. His natural temperament, and the circumstances under which that temperament found its daily sphere of action; his training, both Judaic and Hellenistic; his conversion and sanctification, permeating his whole life and thoughts—these united make up the Paul we know. And each of these has exercised a marked influence on his style.

"1. The absorption in the one thought before him, which makes him state without any qualification truths which, taken in the whole extent of his words, seem mutually irreconcilable; the dramatic, rapid, overwhelming series of questions which show that in his controversial passages he is always mentally face to face with an objection; the *centrifugal* force of mental activity, which drives him into incessant digressions and goings off at a word, due to his vivid power of realization; the *centripetal* force of imagination, which keeps all these digressions under the control of one dominant thought; and the grand confusions of metaphor; the vehemence which makes him love the most emphatic compounds; the irony and sarcasm; the chivalrously delicate courtesy; the overflowing sympathy with

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[133] Apostolic Era, p. 254.

the Jew, the pagan, the barbarian—with saint and sinner, king and slave, man and woman, young and old; the passion which now makes his voice ring with indignation and now break with sobs; the accumulation and variation of words, from the desire to set forth the truths which he is proclaiming in every possible light; the emotional emphasis and personal references of his style; the depressed humility passing into boundless exultation—all these are due to his *natural temperament,* and the atmosphere of controversy and opposition on the one hand, and deep affection on the other, in which he worked.

"2. The rhetorical figures, play of words, assonances, oxymora, antitheses of his style; the constant widening of his horizon; the traceable influence of cities, and even of personal companions, upon his vocabulary; the references to Hellenic life; the method of quoting Scripture; the rabbinic style of exegesis—these are due to his training at Tarsus and Jerusalem, his life at Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome.

"3. The daring faith which never dreads a difficulty; the unsolved antinomies, which, though unsolved, do not trouble him; 'the bold soaring dialectics with which he rises from the forms of one finite and earthly thought to the infinite and spiritual life embodied in them'; the 'language of ecstasy,' which was to him, as he meant it to be to his converts, the language of the work-day world; that transcendental-absurd, as it seems to the world, which was the very life both of his conscience and intellect, and made him what he was; the way in which, as with one powerful sweep of the wing, he passes from the pettiest earthly contentions to the spiritual and the infinite; the 'shrinking infirmity and self-contempt, hidden in a sort of aureole of revelation, abundant beyond measure'—this was due to the fact that his citizenship was in heaven, his life hid with Christ in God." [134]

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[134] *Op. cit.*, pp. 692–3.

The apostle is in his epistles. We study them together in this book.

III. Value

1. Paul's Work and Paul's Writing. (1) *The Work.* Paul did more for the Christian faith, and through that faith for the world, than any other man who ever lived. In ability and achievement he was equal to the whole company of the apostles combined. He was speaking sober truth when he said, "I labored more abundantly than they all: Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." [135] He covered more territory, he founded more churches, he influenced more of the great centers of population, he reached more people, he had greater success in his more abundant labors than any other preacher of the faith of whom we know. He took Christianity out of the little corner of the earth in Palestine, where it bade fair to become nothing but an obscure sect of a despised people, and he made it a world power. He formulated it in such a fashion that it could and would appeal to the intellect and the heart of all the nations. He gave it such furnishing as made it able to overthrow all philosophies or empires which ventured to oppose it. He gave it its elements of continuous and eternal success. He made proof of this success in his own ministry. His work and his accomplishment were without parallel in the history of the church.

(2) *The Writing.* Paul has been the most influential of all religious writers. He gave the watchword to the Protestant Reformation—"Justification by faith." He gave the watchword to the Wesleyan movement—"The witness of the Spirit to conversion and entire sanctification." These have been the most important revivals in the history of the church, but it would be safe to say that no great church revival anywhere down the centuries or on any of the continents has failed to base itself on the teaching of Paul as

[135] 1 Cor. 15. 10.

recorded in his epistles. We must remember that these epistles are the earliest books of the New Testament. They were written before the Gospels were completed. They formulated the theology of the church, and they have been the church's chief authority in this field ever since.

(3) *Relation between Paul's Writing and His Work.* These epistles were written to aid Paul in certain exigencies in his missionary work, and they were subsidiary to that. The work was the all-important thing with him. Doubtless Paul never realized that these letters would be preserved through all time and would be read by many millions after his death. It never occurred to him that these hasty compositions would outlive his personal labors and exert a still wider influence upon the history of the world than his personal work ever could. It is one of the ironies of history that so much of Paul's work was unrecorded and is long ago forgotten, while these occasional letters, which represented so small a portion of his time and which occupied so little of his attention, have survived him and his labors, and have multiplied their efficiency many fold. It is our great blessing that Paul in all his ceaseless activity found time for some literary composition. He would not have called it by that name. He just wrote letters when it seemed to him to be necessary to meet certain emergencies and to accomplish certain ends. He has made us his debtors by all that he did and still more by all that he wrote. To him his writing would have seemed to represent an almost insignificant part of his life accomplishment. It is altogether possible that if Paul had written a formal autobiography, he would have omitted all mention of these epistles as too unimportant to have a place in the account of his work, even as Luke has omitted all mention of them in the book of Acts. Yet to us the epistles loom large in the estimate of Paul's lifework. *Litera scripta manet.* The man is gone; his written works abide, for our study and our instruction and our enjoyment to-day.

2. The Incomparable Value of the Pauline Epistles. (1) On this subject we quote the authority of Ewald, who opens his Commentary on the Pauline Epistles with these words: "Considering these epistles for themselves only, and apart from the general significance of the great apostle of the Gentiles, we must still admit that, in the whole history of all centuries and of all nations, there is no other set of writings of similar extent, which, as creations of the fugitive moment, have proceeded from such severe troubles of the age, and such profound pains and sufferings of the author himself, and yet contain such an amount of healthfulness, serenity, and vigor of immortal genius, and touch with such clearness and certainty on the very highest truths of human aspiration and action. . . . The smallest as well as the greatest of these epistles seem to have proceeded from the fleeting moments of this earthly life only to enchain all eternity; they were born of anxiety and bitterness of human strife, to set forth in brighter luster and with higher certainty their superhuman grace and beauty. The divine assurance and firmness of the old prophets of Israel, the all-transcending glory and immediate spiritual presence of the Eternal King and Lord, who had just ascended to heaven, and all the art and culture of a ripe and wonderfully excited age, seem to have joined, as it were, in bringing forth the new creation of these epistles of the times which were destined to last for all times."[136]

(2) Philip Schaff agrees as to the justice of this characterization. He says: "Tracts for the time, they were tracts for all time. Children of the fleeting moment, they contain truths of infinite moment. They compress more ideas into fewer words than any other writings, human or divine, except the Gospels. They are of more real and genuine value to the church than all the systems of theology from Origen to Schleiermacher. For eighteen hundred

[136] Ewald, Commentary on the Pauline Epistles.

years they have nourished the faith of Christendom and will do so to the end of time."

(3) If Paul wrote Second Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans in one half year, what might he not have written if he had thought it worth while to take time from his missionary labors to devote himself to any prolonged and deliberate literary work? What he has written always leaves us with the impression that he has not exhausted himself, that he has untold resources in reserve. If these reserve forces ever had been called upon, what magnificent monuments to Paul's literary ability we might have had! Yet it is just possible that any formal treatises or labored compositions would have been devoid of the personal element in these letters and would have been without their consequent vitality and inspiration.

We know that the epistles with all their defects are ranking now among the mightiest intellectual forces in the world. We know that their influence is widening and deepening all the time. We know that they are valued more highly and by more people to-day than ever before. We do not know what the effect of a ponderous tome from Paul's pen would have been. It might be more of a sedative than an inspiration.

We know that these short letters have established themselves in the hearts and the minds of men. Stalker is right in suggesting that the epistles cause Paul to rise "sheer above all other evangelists and missionaries. Some of them may have approached him in certain respects—Xavier or Livingstone in the world-conquering instinct, Saint Bernard or Whitefield in earnestness and activity. But few of these men added a single new idea to the world's stock of beliefs, whereas Paul, while at least equalling them in their own special line, gave to mankind a new world of thought." [137] There is one more subject to which we ought

[137] Life of Saint Paul, p. 106.

to give some consideration before turning to the study of the individual epistles.

3. The Relation of the Theology of Paul to the Teaching of Jesus. For almost half a century now a great controversy has been raging over the authority of the apostle Paul. The cry has been raised: "Back to Christ! Paul has misled us. There is a great difference between Christ's teaching and Paul's preaching. Paul ought to be deposed from the chief throne in theology which he has usurped. He was the servant of Jesus Christ. His Master and our Master must be the highest and the ultimate authority. Therefore, let us forsake Paul's guidance and go back to the only final court of appeal in the words of Jesus. Paul taught redemption through the cross. Jesus said little or nothing about the cross. He preached the Father's love and acceptance of all who would obey and trust him. Paul has a doctrine of human depravity which never appears anywhere in the teachings of Jesus. Paul knows about the origin of sin and its connection with death, but Jesus never touches upon such matters. He recognizes the fact of sin, but he never formulates any doctrine of sin as Paul does. Jesus said that he came to fulfill the law, but Paul declared that the dispensation of the law had been abolished by him. The Christology of Paul is not the Christology of Jesus. Paul's doctrine of predestination has no place in the Gospels. Paul's philosophy of history has nothing corresponding to it there. There is a sacramental element in the Pauline epistles which is foreign to all the recorded sayings of Jesus. In Paul we have the rabbinical methods of dealing with the Scriptures and all the wisdom of the schools. In Jesus we have the simple piety of a Palestinian peasant. In Paul we find apocalyptical speculation and Hellenistic habits of thought. In Jesus we have the immediate intuitions of ethical and spiritual inspiration. Jesus was a prophet. Paul is a theologian. Jesus taught a simple gospel. Paul has distorted and per-

verted it. When we pass from the Gospels to the Pauline epistles it is as if we stepped from the sunny mountainside into the gloomy, close atmosphere of the synagogue. Paul is farther from Jesus than Jesus was from the best of the scribes and Pharisees with whom he came in contact in his ministry. Who founded Christianity, Jesus or Paul? Shall we go back to the Christianity of Jesus or shall we maintain the far different Christianity of Paul?"

A voluminous literature has sprung up in more or less open and complete representation of this position against Paul, and it has called forth a number of volumes in reply. It is evident that we cannot enter into the subject with any degree of fullness, but we would like to offer the following suggestions in answer to the general attack upon Paul by these critics.

(1) The asumption of a difference in the essentials of the teaching of Jesus and of Paul is unfounded and unproven and untrue. We have not two discordant gospels in our New Testament. We have but one gospel. The gospel of Jesus is the gospel of Paul. With minor differences there is essential and fundamental unity in all the writings in our New Testament canon. It would be easy to show this in detail. It is at the point of the apostolic doctrine of redemption that the critics take most radical exception. All other differences are subsidiary to this, and what does their contention amount to here? It means that Paul and the apostles taught an objective doctrine of the atonement and Jesus never did. That means that they proclaimed to the world an interpretation of his death which he never had sanctioned and which, therefore, they must have known to be different from his own. Could they have done that as honest men? Is it conceivable that the men whom Jesus had trained for three years could have been utterly mistaken as to his thought upon this most important feature of their creed? Let him believe that who can! We confess that our faith is not equal to the strain of concluding that

the apostles were either inconceivably stupid or irretrievably disloyal to their Lord. That is what this contention of a radical or essential difference of teaching means.

(2) There is a difference between the teaching of Jesus and the preaching of Paul. That is apparent to all, and no one denies it. The difference, however, is only one of degree and not of kind. Jesus never formulated his principles into a system. The founders of Buddhism and Mohammedanism left in writing a complete body of teaching, but the founder of Christianity never wrote anything for preservation by his disciples nor dictated any creed or philosophy or theology for their guidance in the days after his death. He enunciated germinal principles. In conversations and in more formal discourses he gave them seed thoughts. His fundamental conceptions are few in number and unrelated to each other in any logical or systematic form. Neither in ethics nor in civic or social duties nor in church affairs nor in religious requirements did he set forth his teachings in any precise or final formulation. He never intimates that his teaching is complete. On the contrary, he said to his disciples that he had many things to tell them for which they were not yet prepared, and he promised them the Spirit's coming, that he might guide them into the further truth. Were these promises of additional revelations never fulfilled? We think they were in the case of Paul and the other New Testament writers. They took the germinal ideas of Jesus and gave them fuller development.

That work had to be done and they ought to have done it. There is nothing absolutely new in their writings. Augustine said that in the Old Testament the New Testament was latent and in the New Testament the Old Testament was patent. We may paraphrase his statement and say, *"Epistula latet in Evangelio, Evangelium patet in Epistula,"* for all of Paul's theology is latent in Christ's teaching, and all of Christ's teaching is patent in Paul's epistles. Jesus was no

systematic theologian; but Christianity had to have a theology. It could not have maintained itself until now without one. As heretics distorted the faith and antagonists flung themselves upon it, some trained intellect had to stand in the breach and prove to all comers that the Christian faith was well founded, a reasonable as well as a spiritual service. There was one man in the early church who faced all the facts contained in the life and ministry of Jesus as a completed whole and from the facts deduced a faith which was a system of correlated doctrines and beliefs. That was the apostle Paul. The other apostles had come gradually to their faith as the facts developed before their eyes through the months and the years, and they probably did not have the school training and the world experience which would enable them to see the faith steadily and see it whole until Paul had formulated it for them. They all agreed upon the system which Paul formulated as properly representing the teaching of the Master, but Paul was the originator and creator. They recognized in him the man adequate to the needed task.

These men who are crying for a return to a religion without theology are like those who would urge a return to the life of primitive man without any of the aids and the necessities of modern civilization. You cannot go back from the blossom to the bud. You cannot go back from the blade and the full corn in the ear to the seed. Christianity can no more do without a theology than a man can dispense with his own skeleton. As long as he is alive he cannot do without it. We would detract no whit from the importance of the Sermon on the Mount; but if the Son of God has come to this earth and has lived a sinless life and has died for our redemption and has been resurrected unto the crowning with eternal glory and power, then in that trinity of facts—Incarnation, Redemption, Resurrection—we have matters of profounder interest to the race than anything the Sermon on the Mount contains. If we cannot put these doctrines

and these facts behind the teaching of Jesus, we have in that teaching only the charming intuitions of a pious provincial, with no more authority in them than there is in the ethics of Epictetus and the speculations of Socrates.

We sympathize fully with Josiah Royce when he says: "Yet, as a student of philosophy, coming in no partisan spirit, I must insist that this reduction of what is vital in Christianity to the so-called pure gospel of Christ, as he preached it and as it is recorded in the body of the presumably authentic sayings and parables, is profoundly unsatisfactory. . . . For one thing, Christ can hardly be supposed to have regarded his most authentically reported sayings as containing the whole of his message, or as embodying the whole of his mission. For, if he had so viewed the matter, the Messianic tragedy in which his lifework culminated would have been needless and unintelligible. For the rest, the doctrine that he taught is, as it stands, essentially incomplete. It is not a rounded whole. It looks beyond itself for a completion." [138] That is the way it seems to one of our leading philosophers, and that is the way it seems to us.

What Jesus taught in the days of his earthly ministry did not represent to him the consummation of his teaching. It was all true, but it was not the whole of the truth. He himself was never content with it. He always suggested the possibility and the necessity of further revelation. Canon Bernard says, in speaking of those who regard the apostolic writings "as only Petrine, Pauline, or Alexandrian versions of the Christian doctrine, interesting records of the views of individuals or schools of opinion concerning the salvation which Jesus began to speak," "No, the words of our Lord are not honored (as these men seem to think) by being thus isolated; for it is an isolation which separates them from other words which are also his own words given by him in that day when he no longer spake in proverbs, but

[138] Royce, What Is Vital in Christianity, in William James, and Other Essays, pp. 140, 141.

showed his servants plainly of the Father." [139] That leads us to another step in this discussion.

(3) All of our New Testament books were written by men who were living on the postpentecostal plane of experience. That is as true of the Gospels as it is of the epistles. After the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost the apostles and the church had new insight into the nature and purpose of the ministry of their Lord. Their characters were changed. Their theology was improved. Luke says that in the Gospel he had written of the things which Jesus began to do and to teach.[140] In the book of Acts he records what Jesus continued to do and to teach. There is continuous development in the teaching, and it is all the teaching of Jesus. By as much as the seating of Jesus on the right hand of the throne gave him power and majesty surpassing that of the days of his humiliation in the flesh, by so much does the spiritual insight of his disciples seem to be clarified and increased. The most astonishing thing about it all is their essential agreement in all the fundamentals of their preaching. They came to be of one mind in the Lord, and we are disposed to believe that their mind was the mind of Christ.

That explains the underlying unity of our New Testament. All of the authors of our New Testament books were led by the Spirit and they were led into the truth, and it followed that they were led into the same truth. What bearing has this upon Paul and the authority of Paul in his epistles? It has just this bearing, that all of the apostles and of the early teachers and leaders of the Christian Church, Peter, James, John, Apollos, Barnabas, Philip, Silas and the rest, believed that the gospel of Paul was the gospel of Jesus. They never thought of impeaching Paul's orthodoxy. They may have differed with him on matters of administration, but they never doubted his Christianity. It

[139] Progress of Doctrine, p. 87.

[140] Acts 1. 1.

is the tendency in our day to call them all Pauline disciples and to trace the Pauline influence in their writings. That tendency bears its testimony to the fact that there is one spirit informing them all, and that is the Spirit of Pentecost, the Spirit promised by the Master to teach them all things and to lead them into the final truth.

(4) Paul's gospel, as we have seen, took possession of the church in the beginning and has held possession in the church ever since. If the gospel of Jesus was different, what became of it? Christianity has believed through all the ages that there was no separation between the two. It would need very strong evidence indeed to convince us that the church had been mistaken on such a vital point through all its history. What happened to the gospel of Jesus? Did it disappear without leaving a ripple on the surface of the placid pool of Christian thought? Did it not have a single representative to write or speak in its behalf? Did all of the devoted disciples of Jesus who were ready to prove their loyalty to him through persecution and martyrdom, if need be, nevertheless forsake his teaching and betray his cause and unanimously follow after an upstart adventurer such as some of the critics would have us believe Paul to be? The apostles thought that Paul and Jesus were at one. Is it credible that they could be mistaken? If they were mistaken, and we are dependent wholly upon them for all that we know of the teaching and preaching of Jesus, how can any modern critics rediscover for us after the lapse of all these centuries the simon pure gospel of Jesus, which, according to them, has disappeared totally since the advent of Paul? It would entail a degree of inspiration and even of infallibility in the critics which we would prefer to ascribe to the primitive apostles, if we must choose between the two.

(5) Paul claimed that he received his gospel from the Lord by direct and special revelation. "I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached

by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ."[141] His most radical critics are ready to acknowledge that Paul was a sincere man. They believe that he believed in his inward and authoritative illumination. So did the apostles. The early church accepted Paul's authority, and it has approved itself through all the centuries since. It is too late now to drag Paul down from the place to which Christ has exalted him.

(6) The best way to get "back to Christ" is to get back of the Gospels to this earlier gospel literature. The only way to get back to Christ is through the epistles of Paul. The best equipment for anyone who desires to present Christian truth to-day is the mastery of the gospel of the apostle Paul. "We may find in Paul's writings arguments which, however convincing to the Jew, are not convincing to us; we may prefer his experimental and ethical to his doctrinal teaching; some estimable people can accept him only when they have purged him of his Calvinism; others shut their eyes to this or that which seems to them a blot in his writings; but the fact remains that it is to this man we owe our Christianity. It was he who disengaged from the dying body of Judaism the newborn religion and held it aloft in the eye of the world as the true heir to universal empire. It was he whose piercing intellect and keen moral discernment penetrated to the very heart of this new thing, and saw in it a force to conquer the world and to rid men of all bondage and evil of every kind. It was he who applied to the whole range of human life and duty the inexhaustible ethical force which lay in Christ and thus lifted at one effort the heathen world to a new level of morality. He was the first to show the superiority of love to law, and to point out how God trusted to love, and to summon men to meet the trust God thus reposed in them. We cannot

[141] Gal. i. 11, 12.

measure Paul's greatness, because the light he himself has shed has made it impossible for us to put ourselves back in imagination into the darkness through which he had to find his way. We can measure but dimly the strength that was required to grasp as he grasped the significance of God's manifestation in the flesh." [142]

The teachings of Paul are the teachings of Jesus more fully developed and more clearly revealed. That is the relation between the two. We agree with Kaftan that the πρῶτον ψεῦδος of this modern criticism is the attempt to separate between Paul and Jesus, and he is right in saying that the greatest hours in the spiritual history of Christianity have been those in which Paul became a living power in the church, and it is not likely that to-day a new epoch will be introduced through exactly the opposite, the relegating of Paul to the lumber-room of theology.[143] Renan prophesied that Paul was now coming to the end of his reign. Matthew Arnold answered that Paul would arise out of any tomb in which anyone might bury him to edify the church of the future ages in even fuller measure than he had the church of the past.

Deissmann concludes that "the modern condemnations of the apostle as an obscurantist who corrupted the simple gospel of the Nazarene with harsh and difficult dogmas are the dregs of doctrinaire study of Paul, mostly in the tired brains of gifted amateurs." [144] We need not be so severe in our judgment. Doubtless many earnest and thoughtful Christians have hoped to get back to Christ in a fuller and more satisfactory measure by the discarding of metaphysics and theology for the simplicity which is in Jesus. It is a false scent. Experience has proven that those who begin with the belittling of Paul end up with a lesser Christ. Paul has been a safe guide in the past. We can trust him now

[142] Marcus Dods, Commentary on First Corinthians, p. 68.

[143] Kaftan, Jesus und Paulus, S. 72, 74.

[144] Saint Paul, p. 4.

to lead the church on into the realization of some of his grander ideals. He points the way toward a fraternity of the nations and a unity of Christendom we have not seen as yet. He foretells the ultimate universal triumph of the church, and the evolution of human society into the single and eternal kingdom of God. We follow on, assured that as we follow Paul we follow Christ.

We have attempted to visualize the apostle Paul and to get some conception of his personal preparation for his work, his personal appearance, and his personal characteristics. We have taken a general view of Paul's epistles and have come to some conclusions concerning their form, their style, and their value. We are ready now to proceed to the investigation of the Pauline epistles in their chronological order and we shall expect the detailed survey of the individual epistles to give us further insight into the character of the man as they further illustrate the general principles arrived at in our preliminary study.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

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THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

I. Thessalonica

In the first Christian century Thessalonica was the chief city of Macedonia. It was a seaport city with about two hundred thousand inhabitants. It lay at the northwest corner of the Thermaic Gulf, the most magnificent of the many bays on the eastern shores of Greece. With the blue waters of the Ægean Sea rippling at its feet, its houses and its streets rose over gently flowing terraces to the citadel with its imposing fortifications. Back of it stood Mount Olympus, the fabled home of the gods of Greece, snow-capped and resplendent as a royal palace high in air. When Cicero was exiled from Rome he lived here in Thessalonica for seven months with Plancius the quaestor, and he tells us that he looked for the gods on Mount Olympus, but found there only ice and snow.[1] Through the city of Thessalonica from east to west ran the great Egnatian highway which connected the imperial city of Rome with the Orient. It was made of blocks of marble and was one of the triumphs of ancient engineering.

Thessalonica was thus a center of commerce by land and by sea. It was called "the mother of all Macedonia." It was at the height of its prosperity at the beginning of the Christian era, but it had been a city of importance for more than four hundred years. The ancient name of the city was Therma, given it because of the hot springs in the neighborhood. The most important event in its ancient history was its occupation by the Athenians in the Peloponn-

[1] Orat. pro Planc. 41.

nesian war in B. C. 421. They left it desolate and it was not rebuilt for almost a century. In B. C. 315 Cassander restored it and gave it the new name "Thessalonica," the name of his wife, who was the daughter of Philip of Macedon and the stepsister of Alexander the Great. After the battle of Pydna in B. C. 168 it was surrendered to the Romans, and they made it the capital of Macedonia Secunda and finally of the whole province of Macedonia. In B. C. 42 Antony and Augustus made it a free city. It was the residence of a Roman proconsul and had the privilege of electing its own magistrates, who were called by the unusual name of politarchs, or rulers of the city. It had only two commercial rivals on the Ægean Sea—Corinth to the south and Ephesus on the opposite shore. It was the most populous city in all Macedonia, and, like all other large and prosperous cities in the empire at this time, it had a proportion of Jewish citizens and they had a synagogue.

II. The Greatest Event in the History of Thessalonica

About the middle of the first Christian century the first official representatives of the Christian faith entered Thessalonica. There were three of them. They were traveling on foot and they had come directly from Philippi. There the two older men had been scourged and imprisoned, and the chief magistrates had besought them to leave the town. With their younger companion they had trudged off on the highway to the capital of that district, the seaport town of Amphipolis, and then without tarrying they had turned inland and gone on to the large city of Apollonia, and then on and on for a journey of nearly a hundred miles in all to Thessalonica. The three men were named Paul, Silas, and Timothy. Paul was the leader and he had a habit of making his way to the great centers of commerce and human activity. This was his first trip to Europe. He

had entered it by way of Macedonia, and the greatest city of Macedonia had been his goal from the first. He liked large cities. He had been city bred and he never felt much at home until he got into a great city. This walk of a hundred miles from Philippi to Thessalonica was through beautiful scenery and along a splendid road, but Paul had no eye for natural beauty, and country landscapes never appealed to him. His limbs were stiff from being fastened in the prison stocks at Philippi, and his back was sore and raw from the scourging he had received there. Some men would have tarried in some quiet and secluded spot until their wounds were healed at least. Paul had no thought of tarrying anywhere except in a city, and he had a work to do which allowed of no delay. His back would heal just as quickly if he were about that work as if he were idle. So he hastened on.

No one welcomed them into Thessalonica. The proud city had seen triumphal processions of conquering generals file into its streets, and all its citizens had turned out to swell the acclaiming throng; but these men surely did not appear to be conquerors. They were Jews, to begin with; they belonged to a despised race. Then they were fugitives, just out of prison, dusty and forlorn. They evidently were poor men, wandering vagabonds in search of a job. They were greeted with suspicious glances, and they looked for the Jewish community before they found a friendly face. The first thing they had to do was to find a place where they might lodge for a time, and then it seems that the second necessity pressing hard upon them was that of finding employment and the assured income it would bring. We are told that a famine was raging in the Roman empire at this time and that the prices of food and the necessaries of life had risen to most exorbitant figures. The staple trade in Thessalonica was the manufacture of coarse cloth for tents. It has remained one of the chief businesses of the city to the present day. A modern traveler tells us that

"the sound that follows the ear as one walks through the streets to-day is the wheezing and straining vibration of the loom and the pendulum-like click of the regular and ceaseless shuttle." [2]

Paul was a tentmaker by trade and as he walked up and down these factory streets and heard the sound of the shuttles and looms he asked for employment again and again. Having found it, the three men went to work. The remuneration was small, and they could not make expenses; but they worked hard both night and day,[3] and twice they received some financial aid from the friends they had left behind them at Philippi.[4] In this way, working before daylight and long after nightfall, they managed to make ends meet, to pay all their bills, and to be independent. When the Sabbath came Paul appeared in the Jewish synagogue and, as his custom was, he preached to them the gospel of the crucified Jesus as the risen Christ. Through three weeks he was permitted to continue this reasoning in the synagogue, and some were persuaded that he proclaimed the truth. But most of the Jews felt about this doctrine of a crucified Christ just as Paul himself had felt before the Damascus vision, and they decided that such a blasphemy ought to have no countenance from them and that its adherents ought to be persecuted and driven out of the community.

After three weeks the synagogue was closed against Paul, and his further missionary ministry was carried on in private homes and in individual interviews. How long this lasted we cannot tell, but probably for some months. A Christian church was organized which seems to have made its headquarters in the house of Jason. Of course they were not many in number. There had been no time for even so indefatigable an evangelist as Paul to gather

[2] Dods, Introduction to the New Testament, p. 153.

[3] 1 Thess. 2. 9.

[4] Phil. 4. 16.

any large number of converts about him. They were all the product of personal evangelism. Paul had talked with each one of them, as a father with his children.[5] Most of them were Gentiles.[6] The large majority of them belonged to the working class, the people with whom Paul had been associating in his daily labor.[7] It was a marvel that three strangers could enter a heathen city and in a single summer season could gather even a small company of artisans about them as the devoted adherents of a new and unpopular and persecuted faith. They had to do it in the face of the violent opposition of all their own countrymen and in the face of the heathenism dominant here for centuries. The first missionaries on a foreign soil usually expect to spend months in preparation for the reaping of a spiritual harvest. They do not expect to enter any virgin territory, where their form of faith never has been heard in public preaching and where all the religious teaching of the centuries has been of a radically different character, and found a church in the first six months. Paul seems to have expected just such a result from his preaching.

Everything seemed to be against him—his appearance, his poverty, his unpopularity, his astounding and confounding doctrine and prophecy. No miracles were wrought here in Thessalonica, as far as we know. There was nothing to create a sensation and to direct attention to these men except the matter of their preaching and the manner of their life. The one great marvel of this Thessalonian ministry was that it had such immediate results in the formation of a church in a few months! How did it happen? The only explanation is that given by Paul himself, "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance; even as ye know what manner of men we showed ourselves toward you for

[5] 1 Thess. 2. 11.

[6] 1 Thess. 1. 9, 10.

[7] 1 Thess. 4. 11.

your sake."[8] Integrity of personality, assurance of faith, spiritual power in life and in preaching—these things accomplished wonders in those days, as they have accomplished wonders ever since. Through the whole city people began to inquire who these men were. The news concerning the life and death of Jesus was passed from mouth to mouth and the rapid spread through all Palestine and Asia Minor of this new faith in a Crucified One became generally known.

As the success of these missionaries in making converts in Thessalonica was noised abroad the Jews were moved with jealousy. They had been living here in Thessalonica, some of them, for years and years and they had not succeeded in making any considerable number of the Gentiles into Jews. Why should these three men come into the city and in a very few months attract some scores of Gentiles to what seemed to them a gross perversion of the Jewish faith? They ought to be suppressed immediately. So they incited a mob which assaulted the house of Jason and haled him and certain of his friends before the politarchs. There Jason was compelled to give security that the Christian missionaries would leave the city at once. On this condition the prisoners were released, and that night Paul and Silas and Timothy were smuggled out of the city and sent on their way to Berœa.

They had come into the city by daylight. They went out under cover of the darkness, as if their deeds had been evil. Their assailants had said, "These men have turned the world upside down;"[9] and that was true in a certain sense. They were revolutionists of the most radical sort. Only, they were turning the world right side up; and the Jews in Thessalonica had not realized that fact. The Christian centuries have proven it since. Those three men had founded the second church of European Christendom here

[8] 1 Thess. 1. 5.

[9] Acts 17. 6.

in Thessalonica, and that was the most important event in the whole history of the city. We know the city to-day, not because of anything else which took place in it, but because those three men spent some three months or more in their threefold work of manual labor and public preaching and individual evangelism. Thessalonica has been of interest in world history because it became the seat of a Christian church.

III. Later History of the City and Church

A very short time after Paul left the city of Thessalonica he wrote back to the members of the church there, "From you hath sounded forth, [ἐξήχηται, echoed out, trumpeted abroad] the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith toward God is gone forth."[10] In every place! If that were true in any sense in Paul's own day, how much truer has it become since then! One can trace a straight line of blessing from that church in Thessalonica to any spot on the earth where the Christian faith has been preached. The ninth century was the heroic age in the history of the church in Thessalonica. In that century the two brothers Cyril and Methodius went out from this church as missionaries and they evangelized the Bohemians and the Moravians. Among these John Huss appeared later, and from John Huss and John Wiclif, his master, the later reformers caught much of their inspiration. Later still there was that Moravian community at Herrnhut which sent Peter Böhler to London, and in the Moravian prayer meeting in Aldersgate Street John Wesley's heart was strangely warmed. Wesley visited Herrnhut and afterward organized Methodism largely upon the model he found there. He sent Francis Asbury to America and the missionary spirit of Cyril and Methodius was reincarnated in the itinerant preachers who captured

[10] 1 Thess. 1. 8.

the western continent for Christ. From Cyril and Methodius to the Bohemians and the Moravians, from John Huss to the Reformation, and from Count Zinzendorf to Methodism, from John Wesley to Francis Asbury, from the church at Thessalonica to the spot on which we stand, we find that Paul's words are true and that the word of God hath sounded out from that Christian center to all the world and we ourselves are their debtors.

In A. D. 389 the great massacre by Theodosius occurred in the city of Thessalonica. In 904 it was captured by the Saracens and in 1185 it was recaptured by the Normans under Tancred. Through the Middle Ages it was the main bulwark of Christianity against the Turks. For five hundred years the Mohammedans called it "the orthodox city." In 1430 the Turks took it again, and it has been in their possession until the recent Balkan war. In 1876 there was an outbreak of Turkish fanaticism in this city and another great massacre of the people took place and the arch of the politarchs was destroyed. The modern name of the city is Saloniki. It is about half the size of the city which Paul visited. Its present population is about seventy thousand. There are only a few Christians among them; about twenty thousand are Jews, and the majority are Mohammedans.

Paul wrote epistles to Ephesus, Colossæ, and Philippi, and these places are only heaps of ruins now. Thessalonica is a flourishing city to-day; but its streets are narrow and filthy and many of its houses are in sad need of repair. It bears evidence on every hand of the inefficiency of the recent Moslem rule. The Christian Church is more ruinous still. It has had a noble history. It produced many learned archbishops, as well as many zealous missionaries. It had many splendid Byzantine churches, all of which were turned into mosques. The one good result of the Mohammedan occupation of these edifices is that they have been well preserved, and the city of Thessalonica has

more remains of ecclesiastical antiquity to-day than any other city in Greece. The evidences of the former prosperity of this famous church are still there. We trust, now that it is delivered from the smothering and crushing incubus of Mohammedanism, it may return to some measure of its primitive purity and power.

IV. Occasion of the First Epistle

Paul and his two companions went on to Berœa when they had been driven out of Thessalonica, and then on to Athens. They could not forget the friends they had made in the Macedonian capital, and they were anxious about them. They knew something of the temptations and trials to which the new converts would be sure to be exposed. Were they sufficiently grounded in the faith to stand firm? Their anxiety grew as the days went on and they had no word from them, and at Athens Paul determined to send Timothy back to see how things were going and to bring a report to him. From Athens Paul went on to Corinth, and it was at Corinth that Timothy found him upon his return. He brought an encouraging report.

1. He told Paul that the little band of Christians was still loyal to the truth, faithful to the Lord, obedient to the gospel, and anxious for the return of the missionaries. That was the main thing, and Paul's heart was set at rest. However, Timothy had other things to report which were not so pleasing.

2. He told Paul that the persecution which had begun before they left was raging still. Both Gentiles and Jews were harassing and tormenting the Christians at every opportunity; but the Jews were the worse enemies, now as before. It took a sterling quality of faith to endure under such continuous testing.

3. The Jews had been active especially in spreading slanderous rumors against Paul. They impugned his motives and misinterpreted his conduct. All the malice of which

they were capable was shown in the ingenuity with which they manufactured and promulgated these canards.

4. The teaching of the apostle concerning the second coming of the Lord had been misunderstood by some, and they had made that teaching the excuse for idleness and disorderliness and some were grieving because their friends had died and so had missed the sight of this great event.

5. There were a few who evidenced a tendency to the misuse of spiritual gifts and a few who were tempted to return to heathen impurities. It was not strange that it should be so. The marvel was that so many stood fast in such a trying situation.

Paul heard Timothy's report and sat down at once to write a letter to the Thessalonians. A word from him might encourage them and help them; and he would send it to them without delay.[11]

V. Probable Date of the Epistle

We have no method of fixing the exact date of the first epistle. The evangelists visited Thessalonica and the church was founded there in the year, and probably in the summer of the year, A. D. 52. We know that some considerable time had elapsed since then.

1. There must have been time for Timothy to make the trip from Athens to Thessalonica and the return trip to Corinth.[12]

2. There must have been time for several deaths in the circle of the disciples in Thessalonica.[13] These deaths had been the cause of much discouragement to some of the survivors.

3. There must have been time for much missionary activity on the part of the church, so that its name and fame had spread through Macedonia and Achaia and the regions

[11] 1 Thess. 3. 6.
[12] 1 Thess. 3. 1–6.
[13] 1 Thess. 4. 13.

beyond.[14] We know that Paul spent about eighteen months in Corinth,[15] and that both the First and the Second Epistles to the Thessalonians were written in this city during this time. There must have been some interval between the writing of the first and the second epistle. Cutting off the time to represent this interval from the close of the stay in Corinth, we find ourselves shut up to a period of about six months in which the first epistle must have been written. That period cannot begin sooner than six months after Paul had left Thessalonica and can extend to not more than one year from that date. We decide, therefore, that this epistle was written in the first half of the year A. D. 53.

VI. Aim of the Epistle

Paul wrote (1) to encourage them with his commendation and comfort them in their persecution; (2) to strengthen the personal bond between himself and the church; (3) to break all the bonds between the church and its Jewish and Gentile persecutors; (4) to defend himself against the charges made by his enemies; (5) to make clearer his teaching concerning the second coming of the Lord; (6) to assure all the Christians that death was no loss to them but rather a gain. The sooner death came, the sooner they entered into their reward. Whether they woke or slept, they lived with their Lord.[16] When they died they did not go down into the grave nor out into oblivion, but up into the heavenly places with Christ. Wherefore, let them comfort themselves with these words.[17]

VII. A Noteworthy Epistle

1. This epistle is noteworthy because it is *the first written* by the apostle Paul of which we have any record. It is the first epistle which has been preserved, written by a Christian to Christians, if we except the brief official document

[14] 1 Thess. 1. 7, 8.
[15] Acts 18. 11.
[16] 1 Thess. 5. 10.
[17] 1 Thess. 5. 11.

sent after the Jerusalem council to the church at Antioch.[18] Chronologically it is the first of the New Testament books to be written. It marks the beginning of Christian literature. It is the earliest important document of the Christian faith. Jesus had written nothing. The twelve apostles had written nothing. Paul is the pioneer in the field of Christian authorship. In all the multitude of those who have followed him in all the centuries since Paul has had no superior. It is to be questioned whether he has had even a single peer. The First Epistle to the Thessalonians is noteworthy by its position, leading the van of the mighty host of tracts, sermons, epistles, treatises, and books with which Christianity has enriched the world; and its intrinsic value makes it worthy of that leadership.

2. It is not one of the greatest of the Pauline epistles; but it has all of the *Pauline characteristics* and much of the Pauline power. There is one outburst against the Jews in it. These Jews "both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved; to fill up their sins always: but the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."[19] They had driven Paul out of Thessalonica and they were persecuting him in Corinth. His patience with them seems to have been about exhausted at this time. No Jew-baiter could have used any stronger language against them than this. Paul calls them murderers of the Messias and the prophets, hateful to God and hated by men, sinners up to the limit, certain of the overwhelming wrath which was due their unspeakable transgression! This passage is the only one in the epistle of such a character. As a whole it is one of the most gentle written by Paul. He intends it for comfort and encouragement. He is proud of the steadfastness of these Thessalonians and he does not hesitate to tell them

[18] Acts 15. 23–29.

[19] 1 Thess. 2. 15, 16.

so. "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at his coming? For ye are our glory and our joy."[20] There is only one other letter written by Paul in which there is anything like the same unreserved cordiality of commendation. That was written ten years later to the other Macedonian church, at Philippi. The three Macedonian epistles, First and Second Thessalonians and Philippians, are simple love letters, written out of great affection and filled with protestations of personal solicitude and regard.

3. This epistle gives us a *sample of Paul's preaching* to the heathen world. We have a summary of two of Paul's sermons to the heathen recorded in the book of Acts, the one preached at Lystra[21] and the other at Athens,[22] but this epistle probably gives us a fuller outline of Paul's preaching to the Gentile audiences gathered in the heathen cities than we can find elsewhere. He could not have made much use of the Old Testament Scriptures in addressing people who were not familiar with them; and in this epistle the Old Testament never is quoted directly and it never is appealed to as a final authority, although the prophets are referred to in one passage[23] and Old Testament language either consciously or unconsciously is woven into Paul's sentences again and again.[24] He does not present Jesus to these people as the Messiah, but, rather, as the present and coming Judge of the race. He does not indulge in any lengthy arguments. There is no intricate or difficult reasoning. He does not dwell much upon dogma of any kind. The most of his exhortations have to do with personal and practical matters. Bruce and others have called these Epistles to the Thessalonians "primer epistles," because they had so little doctrinal discussion in them; but that is not a good title. There is little doctrine here, but what doctrine there is is

[20] 1 Thess. 2. 19, 20.
[21] Acts 14. 15–17.
[22] Acts 17. 22–31.
[23] 1 Thess. 2. 15.
[24] 1 Thess. 2. 16; 4. 5, 6, 8; 5. 8, 22.

not primer doctrine. There is little theology here, but what theology there is has proven as perplexing to the theologians as any to be found in the Bible.

4. The *characteristic theme* of this epistle is the second coming of the Lord. Every section of the epistle closes with some reference to it. The thought of it underlies all Paul has to say. This hardly can be considered a subject for the primer class.

5. The *apologetic value* of the epistle scarcely can be overrated. As the earliest written record of the Christian faith it bears its clear witness to the fundamentals more fully set forth in the later literature. The deity of Christ, the connection between his death and our salvation, his resurrection by the power of God, the personality of the Holy Spirit, the Christian's resurrection with Christ, the Christian's union with Christ, the second coming of the Lord to destroy his enemies and to reward the saints, the duty of Christian love and the beauty of Christian purity; all of these are in the first New Testament epistle and first New Testament book.

6. The epistle is of value for the *picture of the apostle* Paul which we find in its pages. We see him as the earnest missionary, the faithful pastor, and the apocalyptic seer. He is well worth our study in each of these capacities, and in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians we have an original document full of instructive material upon these things. As a single example let us look at that passage in the second chapter in which Paul describes his ministry among them.[25] It ought to be full of suggestion to every servant of Christ and men. Pauline success can be attained and maintained only in the reproduction of these characteristics of the Pauline ministry. "Our entering in unto you . . . hath not been found vain," [26] Paul says, and then he proceeds to show how and why that was true.

[25] I Thess. 2. 1–14.

[26] I Thess. 2. 1.

(1) He preached with *boldness increased by opposition.*[27] "They treated us shamefully in Philippi, and therefore we waxed bold to speak unto you in much conflict. We have had experience in these things. We know how to stand hard knocks by this time. When we are treated badly we do not think of quitting the work. We think only how much easier it will be to endure these things a second time. Persecution does not make us timid. It makes us bolder than before. Conflict does not discourage us. It only hardens us for the further fray. We thrive on opposition. Are there many enemies? Then there is need of greater zeal." The dauntless spirit of the apostle Paul speaks in these words. Antagonism bred heroism in him.

(2) His preaching even in the face of aggressive hostility was in *full assurance of faith.*[28] There was no question in Paul's mind as to the truth of what he had to proclaim. He had full assurance at that point. He never preached his doubts. He never talked of things of which he himself was not certain. There was no admixture of error in his exhortation. He had the truth, and the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and he was ready to stake his life and his all upon it.

(3) He claimed for his preaching that it was characterized by *purity* of motive and speech.[28] Christianity was clean. It stood in opposition to all the uncleanness of heathenism. Its doctrines were pure. Its life was pure. It preached and practiced purity in everything.

(4) Paul's preaching was *without any deception* in it. Everything was open and above board. He never caught anybody with guile. He never pursued any end of indirection. He never economized the revelation of truth. He preached the whole gospel without mental reservations. Every part of it was for everybody. No part of it was too good for anyone. He did not beat about the bush. He

[27] 1 Thess. 2. 2.

[28] 1 Thess. 2. 3.

went straight at the heart of the matter in hand. There was no room for guile in such preaching.

(5) Paul *never flattered* anybody in his preaching.[29] He sought for the approval of God rather than the approval of men. He was not a man pleaser. He never tried to tickle anybody's ears with a soft message. He never tried to curry anybody's favor by shading or concealing the truth. His object was not to attach men to himself, but to attract men to God. He opened his heart to God, that its every motive might be approved by him. He called God to witness that he never had used words of flattery to any one. He might have had an easier time of it if he had. He might have escaped much persecution if he had had an oily tongue and an ingratiating manner. He might have had a comparatively pleasant experience wherever he went if he had made it the rule of his life never to offend anyone, always to say pleasant things to everyone, and to keep on good terms with everybody. Paul had a quite different ideal in his ministry. He did not think it his duty to be beloved and adored by all his hearers. He did not try to develop a perfectly fascinating personality. He was not a dear, sweet man. He was of a different type. Instead of flattering anybody into self-conceit he flattened out all self-conceit by proving that every man was a sinner and, therefore, that he came far short of the glory made possible in Christ.

(6) It followed that there was *no self-seeking* in Paul's ministry.[30] He did not ask anybody to flatter him. He did not seek any glory from men. He did not care for commendation or compensation from them. He did not make his ministry a cloak of covetousness. God was his witness to that. He was not seeking a salary; he was seeking for souls. He was not out after money, but after men. He might have claimed authority as an apostle. He claimed only a hearing as a preacher of the gospel of Christ.

[29] 1 Thess. 2. 4, 5.

[30] 1 Thess. 2. 5, 6.

(7) Paul's ministry was a *sympathetic and affectionate* one.[31] He was gentle with the new converts, even as a nurse is gentle with her own children. He was affectionate as a mother, willing to lay down her own life for those who have become so dear to her. He was stern enough in dealing with sin and with sinners. He was an apostle of judgment when preaching to them. Yet when a soul had truly repented and had come into the beginnings of faith Paul was an apostle of love in dealing with him. He could be patient and gentle and sympathetic and affectionate as a mother with her little child. If it needed nursing, he could serve as a nurse; if it needed any sacrifice, he would make it without hesitation.

(8) Paul's preaching was *filled with labor and travail*.[32] He worked night and day at manual labor and personal evangelism. There was not a lazy bone in him. A lazy man has no place in the Christian ministry. A man *can* be lazy in the Christian ministry, and heap up condemnation for his soul! Paul did what he could and held up hands clean of the blood of all men before God. If they were lost, it was not his fault. It was not through his indifference or neglect. It was not because he had been lazy and had let them alone. He had labored for them; he had travailed with them. He had spent himself in their behalf. He had given full proof of his devotion to them. He had agonized over them. He knew what physical and mental and spiritual exhaustion meant in his ministry. He grudged nothing. He gave everything. His time, his strength, his sleep, his thought, his prayer, his constant endeavor, the night and the day were given to the furtherance of his mission and the helping and saving of men. He would be a burden to no one; he would be a blessing to all. To that end he would labor till his strength failed him. He would travail till souls were newborn.

[31] 1 Thess. 2. 7, 8.

[32] 1 Thess. 2. 9.

(9) Paul declares that his ministry was a *holy, righteous, and unblamable* one.[33] He claimed to be a holy man. He would not have considered himself fit for the ministry if he had not been. He had no false modesty in giving his testimony on that point. He was not so humble as to say that his ministry was not that of a holy man. He had behaved himself holily and righteously, and he knew it; and they knew it. He appeals to their own knowledge with all assurance. They were his witnesses that his conduct had been all that it ought to have been. His holiness was known and read of all men. It was not the sort of holiness which takes itself out in profession. It was manifest to all in righteous action. Paul had not disgraced the Christian faith in any way. His conduct had been unblamable throughout. He was as confident of his conduct as he was of his creed. His practice had been consistent with his preaching. His doctrine had been demonstrated in his deeds.

(10) Paul was not content with public preaching alone. His ministry was *filled with private admonition and instruction.* "Ye know how we dealt with each one of you, as a father with his own children, exhorting you, and encouraging you, and testifying."[34] Paul came to close quarters with his congregation. He was not satisfied to stand off at a distance and talk at them. He got into their homes and talked with them as a father with his own children. He exhorted them according to their individual needs. He encouraged them according to their individual difficulties. He testified that the grace of God was sufficient to meet each case. He dealt with them one by one. It was slow work, but it was sure work. It was not such showy work as swaying great audiences might be; but the results were secure. Emotional tides had their ebb and flow. Individual conversation was upon a saner level, and both Paul

[33] 1 Thess. 2. 10.

[34] 1 Thess. 2. 11.

and his hearer knew just where they were at each step. These Thessalonian converts could stand alone when Paul was taken from them. They were steadfast in persecution and loyal to the end.

(11) Paul's ministry had *a practical end* in view.[35] He aimed at immediate and lasting results. Only one thing would satisfy him. His converts must walk worthily of God, who had called them into his own kingdom and glory.

(12) We scarcely need to add that Paul's ministry was *a fruitful ministry.* Men were attracted by it. Its inspiration was contagious. It reached the hearts and regenerated the lives of those who heard. It turned heathen sensualists into Christian saints. It founded new churches in Asia and Europe. It changed the moral complexion of the whole ancient world.

This is the Pauline type of ministry, full of holy boldness and assurance, free from impurity, deceit, self-seeking, and flattery; sympathetic, affectionate, laborious, holy, righteous, unblamable, dealing with individuals, aiming at practical ends, and in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, claiming and achieving victory continually in the name and with the help of God. Is this the type of ministry in the church to-day?

VIII. Some Noteworthy Passages

1. In 1 Cor. 13. 13 we have the Pauline triad of Christian graces, "Now abideth faith, hope, and love, these three." In Rev. 2. 2 we have the Apocalyptic triad, "I know thy works, and thy toil and patience." In 1 Thess. 1. 3 we have these two triads combined, "We remember without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." There is no antithesis between faith and works in Paul's mind. Faith shows itself in "work." It is never idle. It never sits with folded hands. Faith is full of energy. It proves itself in ceaseless activity.

[35] 1 Thess. 2. 12.

Even so love "labors." Love never counts the cost. It toils without ceasing. It delights to spend and be spent in behalf of those it loves. It bears any burden; it undertakes any task; it travails without murmuring; it suffers without complaining. Love proves itself in its "labor" for others. It is not content with expressions of affection. It expresses its affection not in words but in deeds, not in sentiment but in service, not in love lyrics merely but in love labors. Faith may be disappointed again and again; but it will "work" on in perfect confidence that in the end it will appear that He is faithful who has promised. Love may be disappointed again and again, but it will "labor" on and never be discouraged as long as love lasts.

Hope may be disappointed again and again, but it will be "patient" and wait for the consummation of its desires. Hope is never fretful and peevish. Hope is full of faith and therefore patient to the end. Hope proves itself in patience. An idle faith, a lazy love, an impatient hope are not possible in the Christian life. These two triads are indissolubly wedded in the Christian faith. That is about the first truth proclaimed in this first Christian writing. In the Pastoral Epistles Paul substitutes "patience" for "hope" in his triad in three different passages, namely 1 Tim. 6. 11, "Follow after faith, love, patience"; and 2 Tim. 3. 10, "Thou didst follow my faith, love, patience"; and Titus 2. 2, "Let aged men be sound in faith, in love, in patience." It seems as if Paul the aged had come to identify patience and hope, and to believe that the possession of hope was proven by patient endurance to the end. Do faith, hope, and love seem to any to be feminine graces, to be cultivated in the shade or in the seclusion of the home? Let them be joined in wedlock to this masculine trio—work, labor, patience—bearing the heat and the burden of the day in the world's great harvest field, and from that union will come all the good things we pray for, hope for, and long to see. These six conjoined will regenerate the race.

2. Note the oxymoron in 1. 6, "Ye received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit." Affliction with joy! It represents a new possibility introduced into the world by the Christian faith. The phrase describes the life of Jesus, who was the greatest sufferer the world has known, and who yet had the greatest joy in world victory, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame. Was there ever any affliction like unto his? Was there ever any joy that equaled his own? Affliction with joy! It describes the life experience of the apostle Paul. At the time of his conversion he was told, "I will show thee how many things thou must suffer for my name's sake." [36] His Christian calling meant affliction for him wherever he went; but he had the Spirit's presence, and that meant love and joy and peace. Affliction with joy! The Master had promised it to all who followed him, "In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." [37] Tribulation, consolation, coronation! These three things are sure to fall to the portion of every faithful disciple; but the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the joy we have in the Holy Spirit and the glory which shall be revealed. Like the Thessalonians we receive the gospel gladly, even though it does mean affliction in world antagonism, because we may have through it world victory.

3. In 4. 11 we find three things for which Paul thought the Thessalonians might safely be ambitious. Ambition is in bad repute in some quarters. We venture to say that it depends altogether upon the nature of an ambition, upon the end at which it aims, as to whether it is bad or good. There may be a holy ambition as well as an evil one. Paul was an ambitious man. He says so himself, and he tells us what his ambitions were. In Rom. 15. 20 he says that he was ambitious to evangelize where Christ had not yet

[36] Acts 9. 16.

[37] John 16. 33.

been named,[38] where the gospel had not yet been preached, that he might not build upon another man's foundation. He was ambitious to be a pioneer in the missionary field. That, surely, was a worthy ambition. To the realization of that ambition Paul sacrificed his life. He carried the gospel into the most difficult foreign fields. He made Pauline Christianity the dominant force in Europe. In 2 Cor. 5. 9 Paul tells us of another of his ambitions. We are ambitious, he says, to be well pleasing unto God.[39] Paul loved honor, but it was the honor of God which he coveted. He sought for glory, but, as he told the Thessalonians, he did not seek the glory of men.[40] He was ambitious, but his only ambition was to please God. That, surely, was a worthy ambition. To the realization of that ambition Paul dedicated his life. He could call God to witness that his conscience was clear all the time. At the end of his life he could say, "I have fought a good fight; I have won the crown."

In this passage[41] Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to be ambitious in three respects, in order that two results may follow. On the supposition that Paul would not exhort others to do anything which he was not doing himself we may add these three ambitions to Paul's list. What are they? First, an ambition to be quiet![42] This is another oxymoron; like that exhortation in Heb. 4. 11, Strive, wrestle, agonize, work hard at it and so—enter into rest! Trying to rest, and working hard at it—that seems like a contradiction of terms. Being ambitious and being quiet—that seems to be utterly inconsistent again. The ambitious man is up and doing. He is keeping himself in the public eye. He is restless and unquiet and always eager for greater prominence and power. "Now," says Paul, "all that energy

[38] *φιλοτιμούμενον εὐαγγελίζεσθαι οὐχ ὅπου ὠνομάσθη Χριστός.*

[39] *φιλοτιμούμεθα . . . εὐάρεστοι αὐτῷ εἶναι.*

[40] 1 Thess. 2. 6.

[41] 1 Thess. 4. 11.

[42] *φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ἡσυχάζειν.*

which some men put into the effort to advertise themselves and to advance their own interests do you put into the effort to be inconspicuous and retiring. Be just as eager to be quiet as they are to make a noise in the world. We exhort you, brethren, that ye be ambitious to be quiet."

This is a new kind of ambition, but we would be just as well off with more of it. There are those in every church who become ambitious to enjoy the extraordinary gifts rather than the extraordinary graces. They would like to be endowed with the gifts of healing or the gift of tongues. They would much enjoy spiritual ecstasies and astonishing visions and revelations. They revel in religious excitement and never think they have a good time unless they can leap or shout for joy. It is not a very wholesome ambition. It is likely to lead to excesses and reactions and insincerities. Paul thinks it is a higher and better ambition to be quiet, to enjoy a steady and sustained equanimity of soul. It would be worth while for some people to become ambitious to attain to a Quaker quietness of experience and life. It would revolutionize some of them, but they would be the better for the change.

The second ambition mentioned here is even more startling than the first. Paul says that the Thessalonians ought to be ambitious "to mind their own business," [43] to attend to their own affairs, to see that these were managed well and that all the things for which they were responsible were taken care of and brought to a successful consummation! How much more rapidly the work of the world would be done if everybody would follow this ambition! The third ambition mentioned in this list is the ambition to have employment in manual labor, "to work with the hands!" [44] Satan still has some work for idle hands to do. Paul was ambitious to keep his fingers so busy with legitimate and necessary occupation that the devil would not

[43] πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια.

[44] ἐργάζεσθαι ταῖς χερσίν.

find them fit for his purpose at any time. He would rather weave the coarse goats' hair into coarse tent cloth than to weave the devil's web. He was a workingman, and this letter to the Thessalonians is a letter from a workingman to workingmen. He knew that steady employment was a help to the moral life. He knew that manual labor kept body and mind in good condition, and so was conducive to the best spiritual state.

He had said these things to the Thessalonians while he was with them. He repeats them now: "Be ambitious to be quiet, to mind your own business, and to work with your hands; and if you do so, two things will result. First, you will give no offense to people outside of the church. They will be constrained to admire your becoming behavior. The Christian will be known by his walk, and the Christian walk will be in good repute among all men. Then, second, you will have need of nothing. You will have a fair maintenance, and you will be independent in the enjoyment of it. Being quiet, you may be self-sufficient. Minding your own business, you will need nobody's assistance to take care of it. Working with your hands, you can make your own living and need not be dependent upon anybody's charity for anything." Here are Paul's ambitions: to be a pioneer missionary, to be pleasing to God, to be modest and quiet, to mind his own business, to work with his hands, to walk becomingly before the world, to be independent of charity. These seven ideals Paul was ambitious to realize in his own life. He strove manfully and successfully to that end. His ambitions were difficult of achievement, but he was man enough to try for them, and his lifelong effort was crowned with continuous and glorious success.

4. In 5. 16-22 we have a cluster of brilliants, a succession of short exhortations, each of which is a gem and which as a collection scarcely is to be equaled in the Scriptures.

It is a unique conjunction of sayings of pith and power.

"Unceasing rejoicing, continuous prayer, and uninterrupted thanksgiving" form a triad of Christian characteristics, unparalleled in any other religion in the world. The exhortation to "quench not the Spirit" probably was given to those who felt that fanaticism was being developed in some quarters under the cover of spiritual superiorities in revelation and power. The natural tendency in soberer minds is to preclude all danger from this source by quenching the Spirit in all his special manifestations. This is to accomplish a smaller good at the expense of a greater evil. Better have the Spirit with all the excesses than to quench the Spirit and have perfect decorum in perfect death. The wiser procedure is to test these professed revelations and manifestations of the Spirit, to put them to the proof, and then to hold fast that which is good and to reject only that which is seen to be evil. Paul's prophecies had caused unrest, and doubtless there were some who made light of all prophetic power and denied that it ought to have any weight or to be granted any validity. Paul exhorts such not to despise prophesyings. For the most part, however, the prophesying of future events has been of little value to the Christian Church. Paul himself seems to have laid less stress upon it in his later ministry.

5. In 5. 23 we have the fullest division of man's being to be found in the Scriptures: "The God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The body is the material portion of man. The soul is the seat of intelligence, of thought, will, and desire. The spirit is that portion of our being which we do not share with the animals but with God. The spirit worships and communes and becomes one with the Divine.

IX. Attestation

"The authenticity of First Thessalonians has been challenged by Schrader, Bauer, Holsten, and the writers of the

Dutch school. But it is accepted with little or no hesitation by the great majority of scholars, including not only all English writers, but men of such various standpoints as Pfleiderer, Holtzmann, Lipsius, Hase, Hilgenfeld, Mangold, Wittichen, Jülicher, Harnack, Renan, Godet, De Pressensé, Reuss, Sabatier, Schmiedel, von Soden, Clemen, and Zahn." [45] Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria make use of this epistle. It is in the canonical list of the Muratorian Fragment. The Syriac and the Old Latin versions contain it. It is as well authenticated as any of Paul's epistles.

X. Possible Agrapha

1. Paul describes the second coming and the rapture of the saints, and he declares that he says these things "by the word of the Lord." [46] Ewald thinks that Paul had this saying of Jesus lying in writing before him, but that it has been preserved to us in this passage alone.[47] Either this is true or Paul is here recording some one of the special revelations granted to him in his ministry. In either case he would claim the Lord's authority for it.

2. One of the best attested of the unrecorded sayings of our Lord is the injunction, "Become good money-changers." This is found so often in connection with 1 Thess. 5. 19 that some have thought that the passage ought to be printed in quotation marks as coming directly from the lips of Jesus.

This epistle was written after fifteen years of Paul's missionary career. For the first fifteen years we have no writing from his hand. In the next fifteen years we have the succession of thirteen epistles. This beginning of the New Testament comes "Twenty Years After" the crucifixion.

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[45] Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[46] 1 Thess. 4. 15–17.

[47] Sendschr. 48.

CHAPTER IV

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

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I. Date and Occasion

This epistle was written not many months after the first and probably in the same year, A. D. 53. Paul still was at Corinth, and some one brought him further news of the condition of the church in Thessalonica. Matters were progressing very rapidly there, and among a certain portion of the church members they were getting worse rather than better. Thessalonica seems to have been the first Christian church to be visited with one of those eschatological excitements which have recurred so many times in later history. Some of its members believed that the Day of the Lord was near at hand, and in the tenseness of their expectation of that great event they lived in a state of religious exaltation which precluded attention to the ordinary duties of life. They were disposed to quit work of every kind, and depend upon charity if need be for the supply of their daily wants while they devoted themselves to prayer and meditation or theological discussion. Their assemblies were excited and disorderly. Some were disposed to panic and others to pious orgies. The insubordinates claimed the authority of Paul for their beliefs and a forged letter was in circulation setting forth these things in Paul's name.[1] Some were being shaken from their reason, as always is the case in such circumstances; and the whole community was being disturbed and thrown into confusion. We take it that only a small portion of the church members were being carried away into extremes of idleness and disorder;

[1] 2 Thess. 2. 2.

but religious wildfire spreads rapidly if it once gets a good start; and Paul takes up his pen to write a second letter to the Thessalonians, hoping to comfort and encourage the faithful and to clear up all misconceptions concerning the second coming, and to strengthen the discipline of the church.

II. The Second Advent

These two epistles to the Thessalonians are the eschatological epistles of the New Testament. In 1 Thess. 4. 13-18 and 2 Thess. 2. 1-12, and one other passage, 1 Cor. 15. 35-58, we have what has been called the Pauline Apocalypse, taking the place in the writings of Paul of the Apocalypse of John in the New Testament and of the book of Daniel in the Old Testament. It probably would seem a little strange to most people that these first epistles of Paul should deal most largely with the last of the logical succession in great themes in theology. Paul discusses the last things first. Why should he begin with a prophecy and description of the end of all things? Jowett says that Paul preached to the Thessalonians "not the gospel of the cross of Christ, but of the coming of Christ," and it would seem at least that this preaching had made the greatest impression upon some minds in this church.

Why should he have put especial emphasis upon this theme? Bishop Lightfoot has made some excellent suggestions in this matter. He says: "There are many reasons why the subject of the second advent should occupy a larger space in the earliest stage of the apostolical teaching than afterward: 1. It was closely bound up with the fundamental fact of the gospel, the resurrection of Christ, and thus it formed a natural starting point of Christian doctrine. 2. It afforded the true satisfaction to those Messianic hopes which had drawn the Jewish converts to the fold of Christ. 3. It was the best consolation and support of the infant church under persecution, which must have been most

keenly felt in the first abandonment of worldly pleasures and interests. And 4, more especially, as telling of a righteous Judge who would not overlook iniquity, it was essential to that call to repentance which must everywhere precede the direct and positive preaching of the gospel." [2] The resurrected Jesus was coming again. The Messianic king was to establish his kingdom. He would judge all sinners righteously. He would reward all saints adequately. These were main features in the primitive preaching, and they furnished it much of its impressiveness and power.

Renan,[3] Hausrath,[4] Shaw,[5] and others have told us that there was widespread alarm at just this time throughout the empire. Many disturbing rumors were abroad[6] and many prophesied the speedy dissolution of the then present order of things. The preaching of Paul chimed in with this general state of terrified expectation. The Christian faith confirmed the heathen auguries. New converts found that their old fears were well founded, and that the great and terrible Day of the Lord indeed was at hand. It was not strange that some were swept off their feet in a tumult of religious excitement at the thought of the immediate nearness of the end. How far was Paul responsible for the realistic vividness of their faith? What was his own belief concerning this thing?

III. Paul's Belief

1. Paul believed and preached that the advent of the Lord was very near. He told his converts that their whole duty was to serve the living God and to wait for the coming of his Son from heaven.[7] He promised them that if they would wait for the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ,

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[2] Lightfoot, Biblical Essays, p. 228.

[3] Renan, L'Antichrist, pp. 321–39.

[4] *Op. cit.*, III, pp. 213–15. [5] *Op. cit.*, pp. 36–38.

[6] Tac. Ann., xii and xiv; Dio Caso., lx, 35; Suet. Claud, xlvi.

[7] 1 Thess. 1. 9, 10.

the Lord would confirm them unto the end, that they might be unreprovable in the day of the Lord's coming.[8] He prophesied that when the last trump should sound, announcing the coming of the Judge and King, they should not all sleep, but they should all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.[9] The dead in Christ should rise first; then those who were alive, who were left, should together with them be caught up into the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so should they ever be with the Lord.[10]

2. Paul agreed with the other apostles at this point. James wrote, "Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. . . . Establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Murmur not, brethren, one against another, that ye be not judged: behold, the judge standeth before the doors."[11] Peter declares, "The end of all things is at hand."[12] John writes last of all, "He who testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly,"[13] and again, "Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye have heard that antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour."[14] The apostolic preaching seems to have been of one accord at this point. The explanation of this fact must have been that they believed that they had "the word of the Lord" on this matter. They thought that they represented the Lord's thought and teaching.[15] They had had his promise of a speedy return. Paul either got this truth from them or believed that he had had a special revelation on the subject.[16] He seems to have been just as sure as

[8] 1 Cor. 1. 7, 8.
[9] 1 Cor. 15. 51.
[10] 1 Thess. 4. 16, 17.
[11] James 5. 7–9.
[12] 1 Pet. 4. 7.
[13] Rev. 22. 20.
[14] 1 John 2. 18.
[15] Calvin, Ewald, Weiss, Weizsäcker, Resch, Ropes, O. Holtzmann, von Soden, Hofmann.
[16] Chrysostom, Theodoret, Olshausen, DeWette, Lünemann, Zöckler, Alford, Ellicott, Dods, Godet, Findlay, Lightfoot, Milligan, Moffatt.

they that the Second Advent was at hand and that it might come at any time and that it was altogether likely to come to that generation.

3. There are some indications that Paul modified his views on this subject in his later life. It is noticeable that after the first three epistles, First and Second Thessalonians and First Corinthians, he does not return to the theme. He lays the emphasis thereafter on the realities of present religious experience rather than upon the uncertainties of future happenings. In Rom. 11. 25 Paul suggests that the fullness of the Gentiles must intervene before the nation of Israel would be saved. In Phil. 1. 21-24 Paul clearly contemplates the possibility of his own death before the advent of the Lord. In 2. Tim. 4. 6 he is sure that the time of his departure is at hand, but that even if he die, the Lord will save him unto the heavenly kingdom.[17] Evidently, the apostolic expectation of the immediate advent was disappointed. It was a mistaken expectation. If it rested upon the teaching of the Lord then we must conclude that it was either a mistaken interpretation of his teaching or, what seems to be more likely, that Jesus himself was as uncertain of the time of the advent as his apostles were and shared with them his hope that it would not be long delayed. We know that he told them plainly that he did not know what the day and hour would be,[18] but he may have hoped and believed that it would be soon, and the disciples were apt to credit him with infallible information upon all these things as well as in the realm of spiritual truth.

IV. The Eschatological Paragraph, 2. 1-12

As in all apocalyptical passages, the language in this eschatological paragraph is enigmatical. Augustine declared that he was puzzled by it, and was ignorant of what

[17] 2 Tim. 4. 18.

[18] Mark 13. 32.

Paul might mean. Farrar says, very sensibly: "So far as it is of doubtful meaning it can have no special significance for us." [19]

1. There are at least two reasons why the passage is put into this obscure form. (1) There was no need under the circumstances for Paul to be more explicit. He had talked these things over with the Thessalonians and in all probability he had spoken plainly at that time, and he needed now only to remind them of what he had said. So he writes by way of allusion rather than of explicit information. (2) This subject had a political bearing, and doubtless it was dangerous to put into writing anything which would incriminate the author. Paul had just escaped trouble at Thessalonica because of his oral teaching there. He would be careful to write nothing which could be presented to the magistrates in evidence against the Christians.

2. Many volumes have been written upon the exegesis of this passage. Malvenda, 1556-1627, wrote eleven books about the Man of Sin. Most of the commentators have gone astray in attempting to find some definite and detailed application of these prophecies, instead of contenting themselves with the interpretation of its general principles. There have been many conflicting conclusions as to the identity of the Man of Sin and of the Restrainer, and as to the nature and date of the Great Apostasy here foretold. We need not put them down. Some were fantastic and wisely have been forgotten. Some have been disproven by the progress of events. There is no good reason for resurrecting them at this late date.

3. We suggest the following conclusions as representing a somewhat general agreement in modern scholarship: (1) The apostasy (verse 3) is the definite and final rejection of the true Messiah by the Jews, which might come, as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews suggests, after a

[19] Messages of the Books, p. 206.

period of forty years, in which the claims of Christianity were to be presented to them even as their fathers saw the wonders of Jehovah forty years in the wilderness.[20] (2) The Man of Sin (verses 3, 4) is the false Messiah who will incarnate within himself all the Jewish opposition to the gospel. He will be a lawless one, working signs and deceiving, and his destruction will result in the final establishment of the Christian Church, verses 8-10. (3) The Restrainer (verses 6, 7) is the Roman emperor as representing the restraining power of the Roman empire, holding the Jews in subjection and preventing them from illegal and destructive attacks upon the Christians. So far in Paul's experience the Roman power had been exerted in his behalf whenever his life or liberty had been imperiled by mobs. The time of the civil persecutions had not yet come. Almost all the opposition he had encountered had arisen from the religious authorities and not from those of the state. The power of the empire had been protecting and friendly. In Paul's Apocalypse it is the restraining power for the present. This attitude toward the Roman government was maintained by many of the church Fathers, such as Cyril, Jerome, Chrysostom, Lactantius, and Theodoret; and Tertullian voiced the prevailing opinion in the early Christian Church when he said, "We have also another and a greater need to pray for the emperors, and, moreover, for the whole estate of the empire, and the fortunes of Rome, knowing, as we do, that the mighty shock which hangeth over the whole world, and the end of time itself, threatening terrible and grievous things, is delayed because of the time allowed to the Roman empire. We would not therefore experience these things, and while we pray that they may be put off, we favor the long continuance of Rome." [21] (4) The mystery of lawlessness (verse 7) is the strange and deadly hatred and opposition of the Jews, whose office

[20] Heb. 3. 7–12.

[21] Apology, xxxii.

and right it was to welcome the Messiah and to establish his kingdom upon the earth, but who were given over to believe in a lie and to take pleasure in unrighteousness, and who, therefore, received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. The phrases in this paragraph must have had some definite and special application to the circumstances of that time. The general truth of the paragraph is capable of application to any time. The Man of Sin may take new form with each new generation; the Restrainer always is present; the victory of the Lord Jesus always is sure.

4. If this paragraph is, as we suppose, purely apocalyptical, it must be subject to the general rules of apocalyptical interpretation. There has been a revival of interest in the apocalyptical literature of the Jews among modern scholars, and it is agreed very generally that this literature has had more influence upon our New Testament than was formerly supposed. The Apocalypse of John does not stand alone in the literature of its times as it does in our New Testament. There are a number of other Apocalypses in existence in whole or in part which belong to the same period of development in Hebrew history, and the study of these has been very helpful in the interpretation and the understanding of the apocalyptical portions of the New Testament. The Ascension of Isaiah, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Psalms of Solomon, the Book of the Secrets of Enoch, the Fourth Book of Esdras, the Apocalypse of Baruch, the Assumption of Moses, and the Book of Enoch are all apocalyptical in character and may have influenced the thought of the New Testament writers in many particulars.

Jude, the brother of James and of Jesus, quotes in his epistle from both the Assumption of Moses and the Book of Enoch. If Jude had read these books and quoted from them, it would seem altogether likely that Jesus had read them, and it is possible that he quoted from them too. The words "when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his

glory" may have been taken by Jesus directly from the Book of Enoch, 62. 3. In Enoch 69. 27 we read, "The sum of judgment was committed unto him, the Son of man." Jesus seems to be appropriating this phraseology when he says, "He hath committed all judgment unto the Son . . . because he is the Son of man."[22] The leading English authority upon this apocalyptical literature, R. H. Charles, thinks that phrases, clauses, or thoughts derived from the Book of Enoch are to be found not only in the Epistle of Jude and the Apocalypse of John, but also in the Gospels according to John and Matthew and Luke, and in the book of Acts, and in the Epistles of Paul to the Romans and to the Ephesians, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews.[23]

If it be true that the influence of the Book of Enoch and of the other apocalyptic literature can be traced through nearly the whole of our New Testament, it becomes extremely probable that Jesus and Jude and John and Paul and the other apostles had considerable respect for this literature, and that their eschatological conceptions were clothed largely in the imagery furnished from these sources. If so, all of this imagery belongs to the current Jewish theology and phraseology; and its usefulness has passed away with the times to which it was adapted and the peoples to whom it was at first addressed. Then it follows that the Oriental and apocalyptical imagery of such passages as this in the Epistle to the Thessalonians has no message to our day.

We learned long ago to look for the central truth illustrated in each parable of our Lord and not to run into exegetical absurdities by trying to find a meaning for each minor detail used in the development of that truth. The same principle ought to be applied to the interpretation of the apocalyptical passages in the New Testament. We are not interested in the imaginative details which appealed to

[22] John 5. 22, 27.

[23] Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible, I, p. 708.

the Oriental mind two thousand years ago. Here in the Occident we look only for the spiritual lesson these details were intended to make impressive and prominent. That lesson may abide, though the vehicle of its first transmission may have belonged to the rhetorical and homiletical methods in vogue in a particular age and their usefulness may long have passed away.

Is there any good reason why we may not treat these apocalyptical passages in the same way in which Peter treated the apocalyptical details of the prophecy of Joel in his day? There was that extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, and Peter stood up to explain the matter to the assembled multitude and he said, "This is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel:

> And it shall be in the last days, saith God,
> I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh:
> And I will show wonders in the heaven above,
> . . . . . .
> And signs on the earth beneath;
> Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke:
> The sun shall be turned into darkness,
> And the moon into blood."[24]

Had any of these things happened at Pentecost? Not as far as our record shows. There had been no blood or vapor of smoke. The sun had not been turned into darkness. The moon had not been turned into blood. What had happened? The Spirit had been poured out upon the disciples. That was the all-important thing in the prophecy; and Peter boldly claims that the prophecy of Joel had been fulfilled at Pentecost, even though all these accompaniments foretold in the prophecy had failed.

Suppose we apply the same principle to the interpretation of these passages in Thessalonians. What is the central truth set forth in 1 Thess. 4. 13-18? That neither death

[24] Acts 2. 16–20.

nor life can separate the Christian from the Lord. When the Lord comes to reign we shall be ever with the Lord. That truth abides forevermore. The apocalyptical accompaniments may fail as completely as the prophesied accompaniments failed at Pentecost, and yet the truth will be vindicated as fully as it was at Pentecost when all who are in Christ meet their Lord to live with him forevermore. There is nothing but comfort in this revelation. Paul evidently intended that all he said on this subject should minister to the spiritual comfort of those to whom he wrote. He concludes this, his first apocalypse, with the exhortation, "Wherefore, comfort one another with these words."[25]

What is the central truth in this second apocalyptical passage in the second epistle? It is the comforting assurance that the Lord Jesus will triumph over all his foes. Whatever disturbing circumstances may intervene, and whatever revelations of wickedness may precede, the ultimate victory will belong to him. This truth we hold to-day. The imagery in which this truth is clothed is of no especial interest to us now. It is nothing but the drapery appropriate to that time and place, and all in which we are interested to-day is the body of truth from which this drapery may be stripped, as no longer useful but rather as hindering our perception of the things which abide. What was helpful to the Oriental of two thousand years ago may be harmful to us. No one can deny that great harm has resulted from the attempt to interpret apocalyptical symbols literally and to deduce doctrines and dates from the details of apocalyptical imagery.[26] Many of these were pure poetry in the beginning. All of them may be disregarded in the Christian life and activity of to-day. Apocalypse,

[25] 1 Thess. 4. 18.

[26] For a graphic description of the Millerite and Doomsealer excitements, see the author's article on "A Study of a Pauline Apocalypse," Biblical World, xxxvii, pp. 163–175, from which some of this discussion has been reproduced.

as such, has no place in modern literature. Apocalypse, as such, has no significance to modern thought. The truths it taught may abide after it has passed away.

V. The Main Lessons

1. We have the apostle's sanction for the application of all previous prophecy and apocalypse to our own times. Paul follows the main lines of the Master's eschatological discourse, as recorded in Matt. 24. 4-51. He had some suggestions from Daniel and from other Old Testament prophets. He doubtless was acquainted with some of the more recent apocalyptical literature of the Jews. All these things had influenced his thought. He saw the fulfillment of some of them in the events of his own day. He appropriated them to the explanation of the present and the future. The general conflict between good and evil goes on in every new age. The men of that age have the right to study the signs of the times and to apply all of the scriptural revelation to the interpretation of them. The study of the Word and the study of the world ought to go hand in hand, and they ought to help each other.

2. No study of prophecy or apocalypse or the signs of the times ought to disturb the serenity of our faith or the orderliness of either our private or our church life. The best way to prepare for the coming of our Lord is in the faithful performance of the common duties of each day. That was the spirit of Saint Francis de Sales, who was playing a game of whist when some one asked him what he would do if Christ were at hand, and who replied, "I would finish the game; for his glory I began it." That was the spirit of that old Puritan who when the Dark Day came unexpectedly upon them and some one in great alarm moved that the assembly should at once adjourn, inasmuch as it would seem that the Judgment Day had come, arose in his place and said: "If this be indeed the Judgment Day, it cannot find us better employed in any respect than in

quietly doing our duty. I move that the candles be lighted." That was the spirit of the Puritan Parson Carter, of whom we are told that he once called unexpectedly upon a member of his church who was hard at work in a tanyard, for he was a tanner. When the minister tapped him on the shoulder, the man turned in surprise and apologized for being so employed. And the parson said, "Let Christ when he cometh find me so doing." "What," said the man looking down at his dirty hands and clothes, "doing this?" "Yes," said the parson, "faithfully fulfilling the duties of my calling." Do we believe in the second coming of the Lord? Then we ought to go on about our business, faithfully fulfilling the duties of our calling. If I were a wood sawyer and I believed in the second coming of the Lord, I would go on sawing wood; and when the Lord came I would believe that he would be better pleased with me if he found me there faithfully sawing away at the wood than if I were sitting down with a Bible in my hand and were trying to figure out from the book of Revelation just when the Lord would appear.

That was the faith of John Wesley. A lady once said to him, "If you knew that the Lord would come at twelve o'clock to-morrow night, how would you spend the intervening time?" The tradition is that John Wesley answered: "I would spend the intervening time just as I intend to spend it. I would preach to-night at Gloucester, and again to-morrow morning. After that I would ride to Tewkesbury, preach in the afternoon, and meet the society in the evening. I should then go to Friend Martin's house, as he expects to entertain me. I would converse, pray with the family, retire to my room at ten o'clock, commend myself to my heavenly Father, go sound asleep, and wake up in glory." That was the Pauline attitude toward this question. Paul believed in the speedy advent of the Lord from heaven, but he went about his work every day just the same. We have no objection to people who believe in the close ap-

proach of the end of all things, if they hold that doctrine in the same sane and sensible fashion.

One may believe in the second coming of the Lord without feeling any necessity for taking the doctrine and shaking it in people's faces until they get scared into good behavior or wrought up into a great nervous and religious excitement. One may believe in the second coming of the Lord and not believe that it is necessary to waste a single moment in the morning in flattening his nose against the windowpane to see if the skies are reddening with the approach of the King. One may believe in the second coming of the Lord and not spend any time in painfully calculating from the symbolic numbers and the apocalyptic figures of the Bible the exact date upon which he may be expected to come. Wiser men than we are have made tremendous fools of themselves in doing that. The Lord some how or other has failed persistently to keep the dates they have appointed for him. Again and again it has been proven from the Bible that the Lord would surely come in the next ten years; but the decades and the centuries have gone by and the Lord has not come. Dates are even now being prophesied with all the assurance of divine authority, placing the advent of the Lord in the next few years. It is a little comfort to us people who have not much faith in these prophecies that they differ so conspicuously among themselves in the dates they determine. However, if they should agree to agree, we would not believe them still; for we know that the date of the Lord's coming is not down in the time-table. We believe that he will not come for long centuries yet. We know that he will come in God's own time.

3. The proper attitude to maintain in reference to the second coming of the Lord is not that of excited anticipation of an immediate catastrophe, but that of the faithful performance of daily duties and quiet waiting for the fullness of the times. In the first epistle Paul had declared that

the Thessalonians had turned from idols unto God to do two things, to serve the living and true God and to wait for his Son from heaven.[27] That is a good definition of the Christian's calling to-day. Active service and patient waiting are better than any amount of fuming and fretting and overhaste and overzeal. Here in the second epistle Paul prays for the Thessalonians that the Lord may direct their hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.[28] The love of God will manifest itself in ceaseless effort for the good of man. The patience of Christ will wait for the appointed hour in steadfast faith and in perfect submission. It will not complain when hopes are disappointed. It will not lose heart when there are unexpected delays. It will go on in the way of faithful service, sure that in the end it will be clear that all things have been administered for the best.

We may believe that Paul was mistaken in his expectation of the speedy Second Advent of the Lord. After nineteen centuries of waiting we know that he was mistaken, if he expected it in his generation or in his century. We think the sufficient warrant for his expectation was to be found in the belief of all the other apostles and in the traditional teaching of the Master himself. We think that it is wholly to Paul's credit that he held to this doctrine of the immediate Second Advent with such sanity of conduct and such common sense in personal behavior and public exhortation. If all Second Adventists had held their creed with the same undisturbed serenity of personal experience and unbroken continuity of Christian service, they would have caused no trouble in the church. It is against the idleness of some and the excited fanaticism of others that Paul here makes his protest. If we rule these things out, then we may serve the living God and wait for his Son from heaven, with all the patience of Christ who sits on heaven's

[27] 1 Thess. i. 10.

[28] 2 Thess. 3. 5.

throne expecting that every knee will bow and every tongue confess his majesty in due time.

These are the main lessons of these two epistles: (1) Study the signs of the times and apply all scriptural truths to them as far as such application may be allowable or profitable; (2) Work faithfully all the time, no matter what the particular signs of the times may be; (3) Wait patiently, even though the Lord's coming seem long delayed, in confident faith that it surely will come in the end.

VI. Some Minor Lessons

1. There is a gospel of work in this epistle. Paul says, "Yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us: . . . for we did not eat bread for nought at any man's hand, but we *labored* and travailed, *working* night and day, that we might not burden any of you. . . . Even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not *work*, neither let him eat. We hear of some that *work* not at all. Now them that are such we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they *work*, and eat their own bread." [29] In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ! Jesus was a worker. Day after day he labored hard in the carpenter's shop. All labor has been glorified by the sweat on that carpenter's brow. When the poor people and the day laborers rest from their labors and gather in glad reunion before God's throne, the Master Workman standing at the head of the throng will be God's Son. They will be at home with him there because he was at home with them here.

Is anyone waiting for the appearing of the Son of God from heaven? Let him not wait in idleness, for Jesus was one of the workers and only those who are like him shall see him as he is. An idle man cannot be a Christian. An idle man is no follower of Christ. An idle man has

[29] 2 Thess. 3. 7, 8, 10–12

no place in the Kingdom. Paul says that an idle man has no right to live! If he will not work, let him not eat! Starve him to death, and the sooner the better! That sounds like rather severe doctrine, but it is Paul's doctrine. He thinks that all the idle rich and all the idle poor ought to have their food supply cut off at once. He prescribes starvation for incorrigible and criminal idleness in any rank of society. It will either kill or cure, and the world will be better off in the end in either case. It is the New Testament gospel of work. "The Father worketh hitherto and I work" —that was a part of the Master's message to men. It is in work that man comes nearest to Christ and nearest to God.

Among the Sayings of Jesus recently discovered in Egypt is this striking one: "Raise the stone, and there thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and there am I." Jesus often reveals himself to quarrymen and to woodchoppers when he is hidden from the wise and the prudent whose hands never are hardened with toil. A certain carpenter named Jesus and a certain weaver and tentmaker named Paul came preaching this gospel of work. It was a shame to be idle in this workaday world. Idleness led to that greater shame of dependence upon another's bounty for bread. Paul prescribed death to the drones, death by starvation. He said that bread belonged to those who would busy themselves to make it or earn it. He said the loafer ought to go without his loaf. Jesus and Paul worked with their hands and with their heads and with their hearts. They worked night and day, because there was a night coming in which no man could work. They ate sparingly, but they worked unsparingly, that they might have to give to other's need. It is a part of the Christian gospel, the gospel of work.

2. In 2. 10 Paul declares that the indispensable preliminary to salvation is the love of the truth. "They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." It was

not necessary that their creed should be perfect or complete. It was not necessary that they should be superior to all misunderstanding or mistake. It *was* necessary that they should desire the truth above everything else. It *was* necessary that they should love the truth with a perfect love. The love of the truth would save a man, even if he attained to but an infinitesimal portion of the truth itself. The love of truth determined his character. The amount of truth he possessed might have been determined for him by his opportunities or his environment. If he had received the love of the truth, and if he held stoutly to it, he was sure of salvation, even though he might live and die a devoted adherent of some distortion of the truth which he mistook for the truth itself. If he loved the truth, he might believe a lie and be saved. The hopeless thing was not to receive the love of the truth and so to be given over to the belief in a lie. There may be the same love of the truth among the followers of many different standards of faith; and if there is, they all have the same surety of salvation. There may be two believers in one and the same lie; and in the heart of the one there may be the love of the truth and in the heart of the other there may be a hatred of the truth. Then of those two believers in a lie the one shall be saved and the other shall be lost. Their creed may have been identical; their characters were radically different. To have the truth is desirable; to love the truth is essential. It is the indispensable prerequisite to salvation.

3. Notice Paul's thanksgiving in 2. 13, 14. It sweeps the whole horizon from eternity past through all eternity to come. He is thankful for God's choice before the foundation of the world. God made the world because he intended to save the world. Then Paul is thankful for the gospel and for the means it furnishes unto salvation in the sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth. Finally he is thankful for the goal set before us, in the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is

a whole system of theology in these verses, and it is a wholesome, whole-hearted, and broad-visioned theology.

VII. Some Facts Concerning the Second Epistle

1. This is the shortest epistle in the New Testament addressed to a church.

2. The word "law" does not occur in this epistle, as it did not in the first epistle.

3. The cross is not once mentioned in this epistle, and the death of Christ is mentioned only once.

4. In 3. 6, 14, 15 we have the first mention of actual church discipline in the New Testament literature. If any man walk disorderly and fail in obedience to the apostolic command, the Christians are to have no company with him. They are to withdraw from his fellowship, but not to cast him off as an enemy. He was to be admonished and labored with still as a brother beloved, but disciplined for his own good.

5. The autograph salutation occurs in 3. 17, and Paul says that his autograph is the token in every epistle he writes. This may be an indication of the existence of forged epistles at this time, against the acceptance of which his own handwriting would safeguard them. The language seems to indicate a number of genuine epistles, and since we know of only one preceding this we must conclude that Paul's correspondence was much larger than that which we now possess.

VIII. Genuineness of the Epistle

Some critics who accept the First Epistle to the Thessalonians as authentic are disposed to reject the second epistle, chiefly upon the ground of supposed inconsistencies with the teaching of the first epistle. Among these are Hausrath, Holtzmann, Pfleiderer, Weizsäcker, and von Soden. The external evidence for the second epistle is better than that for the first. Justin Martyr clearly refers

to the passage concerning the Man of Sin. Polycarp alludes to the epistle. Irenæus refers to it by name. It is also cited by Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian. It is in the canon of Marcion and in that of the Muratorian Fragment. It is found in the Old Latin and the Syrian versions. Upon these grounds most of the English scholars have been led to favor its genuineness; and so have Renan, Reuss, Godet, Weiss, Sabatier, Jülicher, Gloël, Klöpper, Bousset, Lipsius, and Zahn. The epistle never was questioned in the early church. All the doubts concerning it arose in the nineteenth century; and they do not seem to be well established. From the internal evidence it is as easy to argue for the genuineness of the epistle as against it.

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

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I. The City of Corinth and the Corinthians

1. The Situation. The peninsula of Greece has a most remarkable coast line. There is not another like it anywhere. The continent of Africa is an almost solid mass. Africa has only one mile of coast line for every six hundred and twenty-three square miles of surface. The continent of Europe, on the other hand, runs out on all sides into great peninsulas, and has one mile of coast line for every one hundred and fifty-six square miles of surface. As the configuration of Europe contrasts with that of Africa, the configuration of Greece contrasts with and surpasses in its complexity even that of Europe. The coast of Greece is a continuous succession of bays, pressing in upon the land at every possible point from the east and the west and the south. Everywhere peninsulas run out into the sea; everywhere the sea thrusts itself in between these projecting points of land. Half the size of Portugal, Greece has a coast line greater than Spain and Portugal together. The sea is on every side of the land and in every part of the land. There is not a foot of land in Greece which is forty miles from the sea.

At one place the opposing tides nearly have cut the land in two. An isthmus only four miles wide in its narrowest dimension joins the Peloponnesus to Hellas proper. All intercourse by land from the north to the south must pass through this point. The Saronic gulf lies on the east and the Corinthian gulf lies on the west. They afford good harborage for vessels. The seas about the southern coast

of Greece are swept almost continually with storms, and the voyage through them always is a dangerous one. It was inevitable, therefore, that the commerce from the east to the west should tend to run directly from Ephesus to this Isthmus and then on to Rome, and to the commerce of the Mediterranean the isthmus was as important as the Isthmus of Panama will be to the commerce of the world. A commercial city was sure to spring up at this point. Two seaport towns, famous in history, were established on either side of the isthmus—Lechæum on the west and Cenchreæ on the east. On the broadening southern end of the isthmus a precipitous rock rose eighteen hundred feet above the plain, its sides almost inaccessible. It was a natural citadel, like Gibraltar, and about its feet a great city grew. Horace calls it "the two-sea'd Corinth,"[1] for with its two harbor towns Corinth commanded the entire isthmus and had a hand on either sea.

The ports were filled with ships of every size and from every clime. The smaller vessels were rolled across the narrow strip of land on wheels. The larger vessels were unloaded and their cargo was transferred on the backs of porters or by beasts of burden or in wagons to the other coast. The great rock overlooking it all was called the Acrocorinthus. Mounting to its top, one could see at a single glance the whole of the city with its swarming markets and streets, both harbors with their many sails and the steady stream of merchandise and traffic uniting the two, and the sparkling blue waters of the Ionian and the Ægean Seas. To the south stretched the mountain ranges of the Peloponnesus, and to the north, just forty-five miles away, rose that other famous rock overlooking the still more famous city, the Acropolis at Athens. In the far distance could be seen the snow-crowned hills of Thessaly. On the isthmus below stood the shrine of Poseidon, and

[1] Ode I, 7. 2, "bimaris Corinthus."

there was the Stadium, where every three years all Greece gathered to the celebration of the Isthmian games. It was a great commercial center, given over to the making of money and the enjoyment of physical life. It had more than half a million people in it when Paul the apostle of the Christian faith first saw it. There probably were two hundred thousand freemen and twice as many slaves.

2. **The Old and New City.** The city into which Paul entered was not the ancient city of Corinth which had been called the "light and ornament of Greece." That Corinth had been the capital of the Doric states and the head of the Achæan league. Its praises had been sung by Pindar and its influence had been described by Thucydides. It had been wholly destroyed by Lucius Mummius, the Roman general, B. C. 146. For a hundred years nothing but ruins had been left of it. The devastating fires of the Roman soldiers had consumed all the wood, hay, stubble of the ancient constructions, but many of the marbles and the precious statues and columns and cornices had been unburned and unbroken, and after lying in the ruins for a century they either had been rescued and restored to their former positions or they had been used in the building of the new city of Corinth, whose foundations were laid by Julius Cæsar in B. C. 46. Cæsar called it Colonia Julia Corinthus. He colonized it with veterans and freedmen.

The growth of the new city was almost as rapid as that of Chicago has been. The Ægean and the Ionian Seas contributed to its wealth. The popular route from east to west ran this way. It was quite customary for passengers to break their sea voyage by disembarking at one of the seaports on the isthmus and visiting Corinth on their way to the other. It soon outstripped Athens in size and became in some respects the most important city of Greece. It was made the capital of the Roman province of Achaia. As the center of government and the seat of commerce, unrivaled in wealth and in size, Corinth was the place where

any new movement, once established, would be sure to exert an influence over the whole land. It was the residence of a Roman proconsul, and, of course, the dominant political and civic influence was Roman. Many other peoples, however, were to be found in its streets. Asiatics had come over from Ephesus. The Jews had been attracted by the prospects of rapid money-making, and they were here in sufficient numbers to have their synagogue. The Greeks belonged to this soil, and they had made Corinth a Greek city in its spirit and customs.

3. **Reputation for Profligacy.** With these various nationalities, with no traditions, with no aristocracy, a mushroom city with no higher aim than the making of money and the exploiting of pleasures and the enjoyment of life, Corinth soon established a reputation for profligacy which was unrivaled in the ancient world. Chrysostom said it was "the most licentious city of all that are or ever have been." Farrar has pronounced Corinth "the Vanity Fair of the Roman empire; at once the London and the Paris of the first century after Christianity. In the Gentile world it was famous-infamous for dishonesty, debauchery, and drunkenness." [2]

Another modern writer has compared Corinth "to an amalgam of Newmarket, Chicago, and Paris. It had the worst features of each, all mixed together. At night its streets were hideous with the brawls and lewd songs of drunken revelry. In the daytime its markets and squares swarmed with Jewish peddlers, foreign traders, sailors, soldiers, athletes in training, boxers, wrestlers, charioteers, racing men, betting men, courtesans, slaves, idlers, and parasites of every description—a veritable pandemonium. Even in that old world the evil name of the city was proverbial. To accuse a man of behaving as 'a Corinthian' was to accuse him of leading a low, shameless, and immoral

[2] Messages of the Books, p. 210.

life. It is said that no Corinthian name celebrated in literature, arts, or philosophy, occurs in all the annals of Greece."[3] "A Corinthian banquet" was a drunken revel. "A Corinthian drinker" was a sot. "To live like a Corinthian" was to live a dissolute life. These proverbial phrases stamped upon world literature the ancient reputation of the city for all that was bad and utterly vile.[4] The vices of the Orient and the Occident seemed to center here. The reasons for this fact are apparent.

(1) There was a large floating population in Corinth at all times. Its streets were thronged with sailors from the east and the west, and sailors notoriously are a dissolute lot when they are on shore. All the restraints of temperance enforced on shipboard are thrown aside when the sailor is set free at the end of the voyage. Frequently his wages are paid him in a lump sum at that time and he proceeds at once to spend them in one grand spree. There always are plenty of people watching for an opportunity to help him get rid of his money, and the reward of months of labor often is dissipated in a single night or in a few days. The sailor has only an occasional opportunity to be dissolute, and he is dissolute with an abandon that the landsman seldom attains. Corinth had the sailors of two seas thronging its streets all the time. Then there were the other strangers who passed through Corinth, coming from all other parts of the world and tarrying here just long enough to taste of its pleasures. After the tedium of a sea voyage they were ready for a revel. Away from all the restraints of home and among strangers, they were the more likely to indulge in all vices. It is the complaint of Christian pastors to-day that their people who go to summer resorts are not faithful to church attendance and to religious duties as they

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[3] Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

[4] Shakespeare, "A Corinthian, a lad of mettle" (1 Henry IV, ii, 4). Scott, "Who is this gallant, honest Mike?—is he a Corinthian—a cutter like thyself?" (Kenilworth, iii.)

are at home, but, on the other hand, are prone to indulgence in questionable amusements and doubtful practices with which they would have nothing to do when surrounded by their neighbors and friends. It also is said that Americans upon the Continent live a freer life than they do at home. If these things are true to-day, and among Christian people, how much more would they be true in the ancient day and among the heathen peoples in Corinth?

(2) The vast majority of the population in Corinth was a slave population. The slaves outnumbered the freemen two to one. We know how such a situation in America naturally led to licentiousness. Our slaves were black, and black is not an attractive color. Yet the unnumbered mulattos, quadroons, and octoroons in America bear witness to the debasing influence of the institution of slavery upon the morals of the dominant class. So far as the slaves are brutalized themselves their habits and examples are vicious. So far as their masters exploit them for the satisfaction of their own passions both masters and slaves are involved in a common moral ruin.

(3) The religion of the city was the chief aid to sensuality. On the Acrocorinthus stood the temple of Aphrodite Pandemos. She was the guardian goddess of the city. In her temple were one thousand women who were professional prostitutes. They were the Ierodouloi, the priestesses of Aphrodite, the goddess of lust and love. Their service was a service of impurity. They indulged in lascivious dances in the public festivals. Commerce with these priestesses in the temple was regarded as a religious consecration. The cult of the goddess was Oriental rather than Greek in its gross sensuality. The rites of the Syrian Astarte had been imported to Europe and established on these Corinthian heights. The city which grew up in association with these rites was a city of uncleanness and sensual sin. It was filled with idolaters who were fornicators, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with men,

thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners.[5] The civilization of Corinth was one which was corrupt and decaying, even while it was gilded and gay. It was to the Christians of Corinth that Paul wrote his most earnest and most scathing prohibitions of personal sensuality.[6] He knew the constant temptation there was in their environment. He said to them that if they were to cut themselves off altogether from fornicators and extortioners and idolaters they would have to get out of that world in which they lived in Corinth.[7]

Paul was resident there when he wrote that awful description of the sensuality of the pagan world, found in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. It was a sketch from life which he was penning. He put down what he saw in the streets of Corinth every day. "God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves. . . . God gave them up unto vile passions: for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due. . . . God gave them over unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful: who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them who practice them." [8] We think as we read this

[5] 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10.

[6] 1 Cor. 5. 1; 6. 9–20; 10. 7, 8; 2 Cor. 6. 14; 7. 1.

[7] 1 Cor. 5. 10.

[8] Rom. 1. 24–32.

indictment that it must be rhetorically extravagant. It did not seem so to Paul, for every day on the streets of Corinth he had seen the patent proofs of these things.

4. **Its Philosophy.** Together with all this corruption of morals there was the cultivation of a superficial and cynical philosophy. Corinth kept up a pretense to great culture. It had a host of halls of rhetoric and schools of philosophy. One ancient historian says that you could not take a step in the streets of Corinth without meeting a sage.

Pindar saw the first city of Corinth in the height of its glory. Paul saw the second city of Corinth in the heyday of its power. The modern city of Corinth has no reminder of the splendor of the ancient times. In 1851 Lewin found there only forty or fifty wretched houses. In the last half century its condition has improved and it has some eight thousand inhabitants to-day. "But all traces of its former glory have been swept away. Wherever else one may find the famed Corinthian pillars, it is not in Corinth. Only a few massive Doric columns still stand like solemn monuments of the mighty past. Beyond these, and earth and sea and sky, there is nothing on which we can say the eyes of the apostle rested." [9]

II. The Founding of the Christian Church

"Ecclesia Dei in Corintho, lactum et ingens paradoxen. —The Church of God in the city of Corinth, a joyous and a great paradox!" It is a sentence of Bengel in his Gnomon. Corinth was a moral cesspool. Into this sink of iniquity the gospel message was cast, as the prophet threw a branch into the bitter waters to sweeten them, and a Christian Church was founded and flourished even there! It is one of the wonders of church history, a wonder which has been repeated many times since, and which every time it occurs is a proof of the supernatural power in our gospel.

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[9] Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

1. **Paul's Arrival.** From Athens Paul came down to Corinth. He landed at Cenchreæ and probably walked the eight or nine miles to the city. Just outside the city walls, in the cypress grove of the cemetery, he may have seen the tomb of Lais, that most famous courtesan of Corinth, and have wondered whether the stone lioness with the sheep in her claws was a fit symbol of the terrible and ruthless power of sensual sin. At the gate stood the monument of Diogenes, the cynic, whose philosophy was well suited to the city's lustful and shallow life. Paul searched first for lodgings and remunerative labor. He found both in the home of Aquila and Priscilla, who were tentmakers like himself and who had come recently from Rome. They were convinced and converted by Paul's life and speech and soon became devoted Christians. With them he wrought through the week and on the Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, until he had established a reputation there as an able and persuasive speaker. When Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia and joined Paul here in Corinth, Paul began to speak more plainly concerning the Christian faith. The Jews soon raised most strenuous objection, and Paul left the synagogue and set up a rival conventicle in a house near by.

2. **The Church Members.** The seceders from the synagogue had a respectable standing from the very first, for Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, went with them with all of his family; and Titus Justus, whose home was opened to their assembly; and Aquila and Priscilla, who were people of considerable force of character. Other householders, like Chloe and Stephanas; and Gaius, who was a man of means and great hospitality, entertaining Paul and the whole church; and Erastus, the treasurer of the city, soon joined them. Doubtless there were others of considerable wealth and influence; but the majority of the church was made up of poor and uncultured people, some from the middle class and more from the slave population. All

social positions seem to have been represented; but not many wise and not many noble were called.

Paul labored here a year and six months—a longer time than he had stayed in any other of his mission fields. Was it because he believed that the need was greater here than in any other city he had visited? Before the end of the eighteen months the church in Corinth was the largest to which Paul had ministered. How many there were in it we do not know, but it seems probable that the membership had mounted into the hundreds at least. We saw in Thessalonica how rapidly a Christian church was formed in a heathen community. If the growth of the church in Corinth was of proportional rapidity, in three times the length of stay the church ought to have become at least three times as large. We know that at last the Jews of Corinth became alarmed at the inroads of the new religion and they arose with one accord and seized Paul and brought him before the judgment seat of Gallio, the Roman proconsul.

3. **Paul and Gallio**. It was one of the dramatic scenes of history, Paul, the greatest man in Corinth, before the judgment seat of Gallio, the greatest civic authority. The pathos and the humor of the scene lies in the fact that Gallio was all unconscious of the greatest opportunity of his life, and he thought that Paul was a Jewish workman of whom he never had heard before and of whom no one ever would hear again. It never entered his mind that day that Paul would be known to millions who never would hear of Gallio except in his connection with Paul's trial. This Gallio was the most popular member of a most distinguished family. He was the brother of Seneca, the famous courtier and philosopher. He was the uncle of Lucan, the author of the great epic, the Pharsalia. Gallio himself was a patron of the arts, a lover of good literature, and a most gracious representative of Roman courtesy and Greek culture. He was beloved by rich and poor alike. He chatted with the sailors about the wind and weather. He

conversed with the philosophers on terms of perfect equality. He was genial, unaffected, and deservedly popular. Seneca said of him, "Even those who love my brother Gallio to the very utmost of their power yet do not love him enough." He had so many good qualities that we might have coveted him for the Christian faith. Had he gotten acquainted with Paul and become a convert to the new religion, it would have saved him at least from the suicide which ended his days when his family had been ruined in its plot against Nero. This was the man who refused to hear Paul speak or to consider the matter presented to him by the Jews as soon as he discovered that it was an affair of their religion and had nothing to do with the administration of the state.

"A strange thing!" says Renan. "Behold, on the one hand, one of the most intellectual and inquiring of men, and, on the other, one of the strongest and most original souls of his age, and yet they passed without either affecting the other. . . . The man of society, with his frivolous disdain, continually passes without knowing it the man who is about to create the future: they are not of the same world; and the common error of people of society is to think that the world in which they move is the only world which exists."[10] Gallio in the proconsul's palace never had heard of this new religious movement in the ghetto district and among the slave population, it may be; or if he had heard of the conversion of Erastus, the city treasurer, he had not been sufficiently interested to suppose for one moment that the faith Erastus had espoused was different in any essential respect from the host of other religions represented in Corinth. In this cosmopolitan city people were passing continually from one religious faith to another, and he did not hear that any of them had found any greater satisfaction in one than in another. How should he imagine that

[10] St. Paul, p. 225.

this faith preached by Paul was to turn the world upside down, was to capture the Roman empire in time, was to drive out all these other religions, and was to dominate the civilized globe? He never suspected it. It was a squabble among some Jewish sectaries about points concerning their law. He had nothing to do with it, and he would have nothing to do with it. He was not minded to be a judge in such matters. They were beneath his interest and beneath his dignity. He turned them away, and the mob laid hold on Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue and the ringleader of the opposition to Paul, and they beat him before the judgment seat, rightly judging that Gallio would not concern himself to protect Sosthenes any more than Paul.

4. **Sosthenes.** The First Epistle to the Corinthians begins with these words, "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth." [11] This is the only other occurrence of the name Sosthenes in the New Testament. Can it be that the Sosthenes of the eighteenth chapter of Acts, the Sosthenes who was the ruler of the synagogue in Corinth and the prosecutor of Paul in that city, is the Sosthenes "our brother," whom Paul joins with him in writing this first epistle? Like Paul himself, was he first a persecutor of the Christian faith and then a devoted adherent? It is possible. If Sosthenes had been converted and was now with Paul in Ephesus, Paul, remembering the former influence and position of this ruler of the synagogue among the Jews of Corinth, would be likely to associate their two names in the superscription of the epistle.

5. **Paul's Itinerary.** Some time after the experience with Gallio Paul left Corinth and went to Ephesus. There the brethren asked him to abide with them. He thought he could not at that time and, promising to return, he went

[11] 1 Cor. 1. 1, 2.

to Cæsarea and on to Antioch. After spending some time here he started out for a third time upon a missionary journey from this headquarters. He traveled through Galatia and Phrygia and so came again to Ephesus. In Ephesus he remained more than two years, and while there he must have kept himself pretty well informed concerning the church in Corinth. Commercial intercourse between the two cities was so constant that Paul must have met many of the Corinthian church members in Ephesus and still larger numbers of those who knew more or less about the condition of affairs there. From the reports given by these visitors to Ephesus Paul gathered much of encouragement and also much that was disquieting. This led him into some correspondence with the church at Corinth, and this correspondence led to our first epistle.

III. The Occasion of the First Epistle

1. Apollos came from Corinth to Ephesus and reported the state of the church there. Doubtless there were many others who confirmed his statements, but his was the most official information Paul had received. Apollos was sure that there were some backsliders and an increasing tendency toward impurity of life on the part of others.

2. Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthians, one of the Pauline letters which have been lost. We call this epistle the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and it is the first in our canon, and the first of which we have any direct knowledge; but in this first epistle we read, "I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators." [12] Evidently, Paul had written an epistle before this, an epistle which has been lost. All that we know about it we gather from indirect suggestions in the epistle we have. We conclude that there were at least three subjects discussed in this former communication: (1) Paul's proposed visit to them,

[12] 1 Cor. 5. 9.

(2) a collection to be taken up for the poor saints in Jerusalem, and (3) directions about their relations with the impure idolaters with whom they were surrounded in Corinth.

3. The Corinthians answered this letter. We think we can be sure of two things in their epistle—its spirit and its questioning. The epistle has been lost, and we only can guess at its contents from indications in Paul's reply.[13] Reading between the lines in this first epistle, we gather that the letter of the Corinthians had been full of the spirit of boasting and self-congratulation. They were puffed up over their spiritual gifts, and they were vaunting their spiritual wisdom. They had an overplus of self-assurance. Yet they condescended to ask Paul's opinion concerning certain matters. It was not at all certain that his opinion would have much weight with people who had such a good opinion of themselves. Yet they were willing to hear what he had to say on these subjects, and they asked him to send his opinion in writing.

The following questions were being discussed among themselves:

(1) Which was better for the Christians, the married life or the celibate life? Should widows or widowers ever marry again? Should a Christian ever marry a heathen? If a Christian were already married to a heathen, and the heathen husband or wife would not be converted, ought the Christians to continue to live with their married mates? Ought they not to separate? Had not Paul written that they must break company with fornicators, and was not heathenism in Corinth a consecrated fornication? How about the young people? Was it not better that the young women should remain virgins in Christ? Could a Christian father with a clear conscience give his daughter in marriage to either a heathen or a Christian? These were very prac-

[13] Findlay has made a very ingenious reproduction of the epistle from the Corinthians, in the Expositor, VI, i, 401–407.

tical questions in such a city as Corinth. Not a month could pass by there, and scarcely a week or a day, without some one of them coming up and clamoring for immediate settlement.

(2) How about the relation between master and slave? Could a Christian slave serve a heathen master? How could he remain a Christian and maintain this relationship?

(3) Another very practical question was that concerning meat offered to idols. All might agree that it was wrong to offer meats or anything else to idols, but was it wrong to eat the meat which had been thus offered? It was presented for sale in the markets; was it wrong to buy such meat, to carry it home and consume it there? It was used in public festivals; could a Christian take part in a festival when this meat was set on the table? It was likely to be in any private home; was a Christian to refuse to sit down to any banquet to which he had been invited until he had asked where the meat came from and had been assured that it never had had any connection with the heathen worship? This would be very embarrassing on many occasions. Must a Christian be a spoil-feast and a boor in order to keep his hands and his conscience clean in this matter? Must he sacrifice all social life outside the church or must he sacrifice some of his conscientious scruples? It was the old question either of uncompromising adherence to principles, and of consequent social ostracism, or of social adaptation in minor matters in order to maintain friendly relations and the possibility of further intercourse and missionary labors.

(4) There was much difference of opinion as to decorum in public services. Should the men come to church with their heads covered or uncovered? The Jews had been accustomed to wear the tallith on their heads when reading or speaking in the synagogue, and they said that was the only proper custom in the Christian service. The Greeks, on the other hand, always had been accustomed to enter the temple of the god bareheaded, and they saw no reason

why they should approach God the Father or Jesus his Son in any less reverent fashion. What should they do about it? Should the Christians follow the Jewish custom or the Greek? How about the women? How about their heads and how about their tongues? Was it proper for a woman to speak or to teach in a public assembly? If she did so, ought she to speak or teach with uncovered head?

(5) Had Paul any definite plans to suggest concerning the proposed collection?

(6) Was Apollos coming back to Corinth, and when?

4. This letter was brought to Paul, and would have been a sufficient occasion in itself for the writing of our first epistle. However, Paul had heard many things about the church in Corinth which were not mentioned in their letter, and he had these things in mind when he sat down to answer them. Some of the things he had heard seemed to him of far greater importance than the things about which they had inquired, and he gives more space to the discussion of them in his reply.

(1) Certain members of the household of Chloe had told him that contentions had sprung up among the church members, and the church was being divided into rival camps with rival champions and rival standards of doctrine and life. There were at least three parties, and there may have been four. We think there were four; for if those who said, "We are of Christ," simply refused to enroll themselves with any one of the other three parties, that would have separated them from the other camps, and in proportion to the compactness of these bodies they would have found themselves isolated perforce. In all probability, however, they were not protestants against the forming of factions in the church, but the most radical and persistent factionaries among them. Therefore we suppose that there were four well-defined parties in the Corinthian church, and we can guess with some assurance as to their complexion and differences.

First, there were the Paulinists. We credit them with loyalty to the founder of the church and to all of his teachings. They believed in his authority and were satisfied with his theology.

Second, there were the Apollonians. They prided themselves upon their subtleties in the exegesis of the Scripture. They professed to enjoy a deeper insight into the Christian mysteries. They claimed to understand and to be able to expound Christianity as a world philosophy. They belonged to the wise. They boasted of their culture. They had great pleasure in eloquent periods and rhetorical presentations of the truth. They thought that Apollos was a much more impressive orator than Paul, and they believed that the Alexandrian philosophy in its synthesis of revealed and heathen truth was the highest reach of human wisdom. They wanted their preachers to be oratorical and philosophical, and they were sure that that would be the only way in which they could appeal to the better classes and could reach and convert the people of Corinth.

Third, there were the Cephians. Their chief authority was not Paul nor Apollos, but Peter; and since they called him by that Hebrew name "Cephas," we may suppose that they themselves were Hebrews, and probably Hebrews from Palestine. They were prone to insist upon primal apostolic authority. Peter had founded the Christian Church at that first Pentecost. The gift of tongues on that occasion was a proof of its spirituality and the same gift was to be coveted and possessed by the most spiritual still. This Paul and this Apollos were of the second rank in the church. They had come into it much later. They were entirely too free from the ecclesiastical authority represented by the primitive apostles. Neither Cephas nor any other of them was disposed to concede such privileges and immunities to the Gentiles as Paul and Apollos did. This party was the center of the anti-Pauline propaganda in the church, and it verily believed that it was doing the church and the

Christ a service in its vigorous protest against Paul's unauthorized innovations.

Fourth, there were the Christians. The very fact that they adopted this name as their exclusive property might indicate that they were the most narrow and intolerant of the factions in Corinth. There is an assumption and arrogance in the appropriation of the title which speaks ill for their breadth of spirit or sympathy. They boasted that they did not take their theology from any human teacher, like Cephas or Paul or Apollos, but only from the Lord. Godet thinks that some of them were docetists, and distinguished between the human Jesus and the divine Christ. The cry, "Jesus be anathema!"[14] expressed their abhorrence of the worship which recognized any authority "after the flesh." Probably they were Judaizers with a vengeance and arrogated a higher even than apostolic authority, and preached the superior purity of the celibate state as that to which the Christ had given the authority of his example. There was no orthodoxy like unto their orthodoxy. They were supreme in piety. They were the simon-pure Christians, the unadulterated article, the uncontaminated remnant who represented the true faith in the world. They were harder to get along with than any of the others. They measured themselves by themselves and compared themselves with themselves and commended themselves and despised others.

(2) A second matter of public scandal had arisen among the church members in Corinth and had been reported to Paul. Differences of opinion had led to differences in procedure, and these in turn had led to open quarrels, and these quarrels had resulted in lawsuits before the heathen tribunals. They did not trust each other enough to have such affairs settled by arbitration or judgment among themselves. They carried them to outsiders for their final disposition,

[14] 1 Cor. 12. 3.

and the outside world was apt to conclude that these Christians did not love each other. They were good fighters and haters instead. It was a disgrace to their profession to have constant resort to the courts of the heathen and to have constant reason for such resort.

(3) Paul heard that the public meetings of the church were disturbed by fanatical outbursts of religious frenzy and irreligious antagonisms of speech and of creed. Women harangued the assembly with uncovered heads. Sometimes many men and women were talking at once, and evidently they tried to outtalk or to outshout each other. There were ecstatic utterances under supposed divine control and therefore by divine authority interrupting the proceedings. Blasphemous phrases had been heard under such circumstances, and angry ejaculations were common. There was speaking with tongues, and it frequently happened that many were speaking with tongues at one and the same time, and the din became indescribable and the jargon was unapprehensible, and many thought that the service was more like a meeting of maniacs than a service of worship to the true God. There was noise and disorder where there ought to have been peace and preaching unto edification.

(4) Paul heard that these glossolalias were regarded by some as the highest possible proof of spirituality, and that people were striving for the possession of these ecstatic gifts who were less concerned about faith, hope, and love, the common Christian graces and the fundamental moralities.

(5) He was told again that certain people thought that the resurrection was past and gone. It was a spiritual experience and Christians looked back to it and not forward in anticipation of it. There would be no resurrection of the dead. The resurrection from spiritual death into spiritual life was the only one the Christian would know. It was a deadly heresy, wholly subversive of the Christian faith; yet there were those in Corinth who maintained it.

(6) The Corinthians were famous for drunkenness and some of the Christian Corinthians still became drunken occasionally, and Paul heard with sorrow that some of them sometimes became drunken at the love feasts of the church. They called these church festivals love feasts, and they went through the form of breaking bread together in peace and love as the Pentecostal brethren did; but some of those who made profession of Christian fellowship and church brotherhood on these occasions at the same time engaged in lawsuits with each other. They were insincere and hypocritical in their manifestations of affection for each other; and their common meal was a pretense rather than a reality, for the rich brought ample provisions with them to these feasts and gorged themselves, while the poor looked on and envied them and themselves were not fed. Hypocrisy, gluttony, and drunkenness at the very table of the Lord! Could there be anything worse than that in any church of Christ?

(7) There was one thing still worse. Some of the members had been guilty of sensual sins; and one offender had become so notorious that even the heathen Corinthians considered his conduct a public scandal, and yet the church seemed disposed to condone it. A certain man was living with his father's wife in open adultery! The father was a heathen and the woman was a heathen, but the stepson who maintained this incestuous relation was a professing Christian! Such a relationship was forbidden by the Jewish law under penalty of death. The Roman law equally condemned it. Was it conceivable that the Christian Church would allow it? Yet for some reason this man was tolerated in the church in Corinth. Was it because he was a heavy contributor to church expenses? Was it because of the intercession of influential friends? Was it because no one cared to take the initiative in a church prosecution? We do not know. It seems almost inconceivable to us that such a scandal could have been tolerated for a moment.

Did the earlier portion of this study picture the city of Corinth in rather dark colors as the most lascivious city of the ancient world? The present study has pictured the church in Corinth in much the same colors. The church seems to have been affected by its environment. Let us now summarize the suggestions furnished by these questions and rumors and try to make out of them a coherent picture of this Pauline church, recently formed out of the Judaism and the heathenism of Corinth.

IV. An Inside View of the Church

1. Its meetingplace is not in a church building but in a large room in a private house or in an old business room turned into an assembly hall. The heathen have their magnificent temples. The Jews have their synagogue with all the accustomed paraphernalia of their religious worship. This Christian meetingplace is absolutely void of ecclesiastical architecture or furnishing. It is a plain room with seats, and arrangements have been made for the introduction of a long table for the feast. All of the appointments suggest the home or the public hall rather than a church.

2. The time of meeting is in the evening of the first day of the week. There are no other religious meetings at this time, so that the noise of the city's traffic and revelry is heard in the streets outside. The Christians come from various quarters of the city and they pass through throngs of their old companions and friends who are bent on business or pleasure and who frequently invite them to join again in their pursuits. There is no holy Sabbath quiet anywhere to remind them that it is time to worship or to help them in spiritual meditation. Some of them come to the meeting heated from their daily labor and excited by some altercation. They step out of a pandemonium of Corinthian noises into a service which may be a pandemonium of excited speeches before long.

3. Now that they are gathering, let us notice something

of the strange assortment of their costumes and character. Here are some Jews who enter with their heads covered and sit with their heads covered through the whole service. Here are some Greeks who come in and who sit bareheaded. Here are some women who are veiled and some who are unveiled, some who cover their heads and some who uncover them. Here are some well-to-do people in the garments of the rich. Here are more in the rags of the poor. Here are some with the ring of the Roman freedman upon their fingers. Here are others who evidently are slaves. The clothes are not all clean. The faces are not all refined. Some bear the marks of prolonged dissipation. Some are defaced with the scars of former brawls, and some are cruel with the lines of inherited selfishness and extortion. Paul remembered their appearance when he wrote, "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. *And such were some of you:* but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God."[15] Converted thieves and prostitutes and drunkards and extortioners some of them were, but only some. These transformed reprobates were numerous enough to make the church a marvel in its own eyes and in the eyes of others. The news of their conversion had been carried far and wide, and many people had been attracted to these Christian services, just to see and hear them. There were many others who always had lived moral and upright lives: Jews who had kept the whole law from their youth up; Syrians who had prided themselves on their purity of conversation and conduct; women whose whole nature revolted from uncleanness of any kind. Men and women, freemen and slaves, young and old, Romans,

[15] I Cor. 6. 9–11.

Greeks, Jews, Asiatics—surely nowhere else in Corinth was there such an admixture of races and customs and conditions with such unity of spirit and purpose and life.

4. The order of exercises was an indeterminate one. When no apostolic leader was present the utmost freedom prevailed. Anyone might lead in song or in prayer at any time. Anyone who felt capable or was so inspired could address the meeting on any theme. Speaking with tongues was given the right of way; and if several spoke with tongues at one and the same time, it was allowable. No one felt authorized to interfere with any manifestation of the Spirit's presence with anyone. Sometimes one arose and interpreted the strange jargon. Sometimes the one who had been speaking had the gift of interpretation as well. Sometimes neither he nor anyone else knew what was being said. Occasionally some one was inspired to preach with a strange power until the whole assembly was swayed by his eloquence and the unbeliever was convicted of his sin. The sick and suffering were brought in and there were marvelous miracles of healing. Sometimes there was an exposition of Scripture which haunted the memory for days. Sometimes there was teaching in the fundamentals of the faith.

There was great variety in the services. One might begin with great quiet and decorum and close like a cyclone of insanity. One might begin with an invective against all schismatics and heretics who did not believe exactly what the speaker believed, and everybody might get more or less on edge as he listened. Then some one might be guided graciously to speak with such edification that all spirits were soothed and uplifted until they felt that they sat in the very court of heaven. There always was something doing in these services. No wonder that people were attracted to them and came and came again. There were some things which were disheartening and disgusting; but there were other things which were very heartening and interesting and

convincing. People really were converted in these meetings. A church of God was being raised up in them.

5. When the public service was ended the unbelievers probably were invited to leave the room. Then the table was spread, and the Christians celebrated their feast of love and their memorial of the death of their Lord. Each brought what he cared to or could. All ate at the one table, and in some cases those who were well supplied looked out for others' needs. Some were selfish even here. When all had finished, and some were still hungry while others were drunken or gorged, the service was closed and all went to their homes, through crowds more boisterous than their meeting had been and past banqueting halls where there was far more and far worse drunkenness than any which had been seen at their table. What conclusions may we draw from this inside view of the Christian service at Corinth?

V. Conclusions from this View

1. The early church was not the ideal church which some have dreamed that it was. This Corinthian church was worse than any of our churches to-day. We do not need to pray for a return to the good old times in church history. We may rejoice that these times have been left behind. Some have imagined that the early church represented the primitive purity of Christianity from which we have fallen far away in these later days. Our New Testament does not lend itself to any such delusion. Here in Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians we find conditions as they actually were. There is no glossing over the faults and failures of the church community. This letter was intended by Paul for the Corinthians alone, and he had no thought that it would be read for centuries to come and all around the globe. If he had known that, he might have been tempted to spare the Corinthians this portrayal of their weaknesses and their crimes; but this was a private correspondence. It was between Paul and the

church he himself had founded. Paul supposed that these affairs would be threshed out between them alone. So he wrote plainly and without any reservation and we have gained in historical knowledge while the Corinthians have lost in reputation. We are glad that this letter was written—for their sake, since it brought about a better state among them, and for our own sake as well, since we know now that the golden age of church history lies not behind us but before us. We are better off than the Corinthians were, but there is much room for improvement still. We look ahead for the ideal conditions, and we labor to bring them about.

2. We must not be led into a false conclusion concerning the quality of the Corinthian church. We might suppose as we read of these factions and jealousies and vanities and immoralities and profanities that the church was wholly bad. That would be a hasty conclusion and it would be false to the fact. There were good people in Corinth, a saving remnant who were sane and moral, "washed and sanctified and justified" in the eyes of God and men. We have a record of criticisms for the most part in this epistle, and all the faults mentioned actually were represented in the community; but as it would not be fair to judge any modern community by the long list of scandals and crimes published in its newspaper, so in Corinth we may suppose that there were those who did not need criticism and so escaped comment at this time.

3. The faults of this church are in some instances evidences in themselves of spiritual life, an exuberant, ill-regulated, undisciplined life, but nevertheless a life which demanded expression and was not content in uncertainty or inaction. There was no excuse for immoralities, drunkenness, or profanities. Those were unchristian and had to be rooted out. On the other hand, all this eager questioning evinced an interest and a desire for satisfaction which was at the farthest remove from indifference or death. All of

these factions were made up of those who professed to have the truth and who were strenuous in its maintenance and propagandism. All of these ecstatic experiences were thought by those who had them to be a confirmation of their personal spiritual life. There was life here, but it needed to be directed and controlled. It needed repression at some points and judicious development at other points. The church had responded to the work of the evangelist. It needed now the careful supervision and training of a wise pastor. That leads us to a fourth conclusion in view of all these facts.

4. It is a proof of the surpassing genius of the apostle Paul that he was able to save this church and all his churches from fanaticisms and dissolution and to build out of them a world-conquering Christianity. "No saner or more commanding intellect ever headed a complex and difficult movement. . . . It was a happy circumstance for the future of Christianity that in those early days, when there were almost as many wild suggestions and foolish opinions as there were converts, there should have been in the church this one clear, practical judgment, this pure embodiment of the wisdom of Christianity." [16]

"A strange Christianity that of the Corinthian church must have been at the time the first epistle was written—a Christianity of which we scarcely can form a conception: a mixture of lofty ideas dimly apprehended with the weak and beggarly elements of the world, of Jewish theology, Pauline mysticism, and the Alexandrian speculations and allegorizing of Apollos, of conflicting notions as to the flesh and the Spirit, continence and license, marriage and celibacy, circumcision and uncircumcision, the authority of Paul and that of Jerusalem, theism and polytheism; a conflict of old customs and habits with new principles half understood, of the puffed-up spirit of self-assertion and

[16] Dods, Commentary on First Corinthians, pp. 352, 356.

dogmatism with the modesty that waits to be instructed, of the sense of decorum with the loud demand for the unveiled prophesying of the women, of a sound feeling of the fitness of things with a heathenish glee and gluttony at the Supper of the Lord; and a babel of a many-voiced speaking with a tongue, which led the looker-on to think the church was mad. The situation might well dishearten as brave and great a man as Paul, not only as to local success, but also as to the entire future of the cause of Christ. Who could have foreseen that out of such crudeness and elemental fermentation could come the Christendom of the twentieth century? It needed the courage, the hope, the divine patience of the great apostle, the sure insight and faith of a religious genius, who looks upon the things that are not seen, to undertake the mighty task of bringing order out of this chaos. Not by violence and rough compulsion could the task be achieved, but only by the ideal and by the love that hopeth all things, endureth all things. He who could at the same time assert authority and charm with the spirit of Christ might venture. This Paul could do, and he has left us the first Epistle to the Corinthians as an evidence of his skill and mastery." [17]

Into the witches' cauldron at Corinth Paul dropped this epistle, and its boiling and bubbling gradually was quieted. The church in Corinth came through its crisis even as the church in Thessalonica had. The sanity of the apostle's judgment asserted itself. His decision of all mooted questions was approved more and more in the study of events and the process of time. His principles have vindicated themselves in the light of the centuries. Universal Christianity indorses them to-day in all their essence and in almost all of their details. We see now that in that primitive age it was the clear head and the strong hand and the loving heart of the apostle Paul which more than any other

[17] Cone, Paul, pp. 118–19.

living force created and established and indoctrinated and saved Gentile Christianity to the world. We never can be sufficiently thankful to him for that achievement. It marks him as one of the greatest men in world history. His monument is the Christian Church of to-day in all the Gentile lands.

VI. Date of the Epistle

Paul had left Corinth at the time of the observance of Pentecost in the year 54. Three years now had gone by. In his stay in Ephesus he had been in constant touch with brethren from the Corinthian church. He had heard many things which pleased him, but latterly the reports had become rather alarming. Evidently, there were evils in the church which were growing and which ought to be checked. Apollos reported them officially and others unofficially. Paul wrote a warning note. The letter he received in reply asked for his decision upon several mooted questions, and, although Paul was not a letter-writer by preference and much rather would talk or work than write, it seemed to him that the time had come for some more extended formulation of his thought upon the themes they had suggested and upon the general condition of the church.

The church at Thessalonica had been in great danger of fanaticism and of consequent dissolution, and his letters to that church had saved it from any such result. The situation in Corinth now seemed to be almost, if not quite, as alarming. Unless certain tendencies were dealt with they would lead straight to ruin. Paul was not one to see the work of his hands go to wreck without an attempt at least to save every soul on board. He was as much interested in the church three years after he had left it as he was when he had been on the ground. It was his church still, and he wanted to find it in good condition when he returned to it. He intended to tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost,[18]

[18] 1 Cor. 16. 8.

and this letter probably was written some weeks before that date. The reference to the Jewish passover at one point in the epistle[19] may suggest that it was being celebrated at the time Paul was writing. That would give us the definite date for our first epistle, Easter of the year 57.

VII. Contents of the Epistle

The general outline of the contents of the epistle is clearly indicated by the spacing in the American Revised Version.

1. **The Greeting.** The greeting contains a half-sarcastic thanksgiving and an expression of the apostle's indomitable hope (1. 1-9). In the greeting in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians Paul gave thanks for their faith and hope and love. They had the fruits of the Spirit in Thessalonica, and Paul rejoiced over them without any reservation of spirit or speech. Here Paul gives thanks that the Corinthians are enriched in utterance and knowledge and come behind in no gift. They have the *gifts* of the Spirit in Corinth. The grace of God is manifest in both the fruits of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. If they only could be combined in Corinth or anywhere else, there would be no need of a qualified thanksgiving such as we find here.

2. **Exhortation and Admonition.** These concern the divisive spirit in the church (1. 10 to 4. 21), and are in the first four chapters after the greeting. This was the greatest fault in the church at Corinth, the one affecting the largest number of people and most seriously threatening the future of the church organization, and Paul sets himself at once to deal with it. Paul conceived of the church as the great unifier of the race. Within its pale there were to be no intervening barriers of nationality, sex, or position in society. Male or female, Greek, Roman, Jew, Scythian, bond or free, all were to belong to one brotherhood and to share and share alike in religious privileges and in mutual love. It was a great conception, a noble ideal. Was it to

[19] 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8.

be shattered by rivalries and jealousies within the church itself? Was the seamless robe of the Christ to be rent by the spirit of faction? Paul bends all his energies to prevent such disaster. He pleads for an earnest seeking after the apostolic spirit of submissive ministry to the glory of Christ instead of any insistence upon apostolic prerogatives over each other. He rebukes all pride of worldly wisdom and exhorts to the humble service of God.

3. **A Vital Issue.** The case of flagrant immorality, with the discussion of lawsuits and the general question of personal purity (chapters 5, 6). Here was a vital issue. If gross immorality such as was manifested in this individual case would be tolerated in the Christian Church, that church might as well go out of commission. If the church did not discipline this offender, and that right speedily, it would sign its own death warrant in the spiritual realm. Paul delivers his ultimatum on this subject. They must either excommunicate this man or he, Paul, will excommunicate them. If they fellowship with this culprit, they cannot longer fellowship with him. Let them take their choice. Let the matter be determined inside the church. There was no need to carry such things or any of their difficulties before the heathen tribunals. Let them decide once for all that a Christian man could have no more intercourse with harlots.

4. **Questions Concerning Marriage** (chapter 7). Paul allows marriage to all. He prefers celibacy for himself and all others who have his continence and consecration. There are some things in this chapter which sound strangely to modern ears. In reading it, it will be well to remember (1) that Paul believed that the world was about to pass away in a short time, and that all his advice is given in view of that impending calamity. He was mistaken at this point, as we have seen; and we feel sure that if he had known that the world was to stand for twenty centuries, as it now has, he would not have talked in this way. How-

ever, the fundamental principles which Paul here lays down are all right. To be sure, if everybody had followed his advice as here given, and all unmarried Christians had preferred and maintained the celibate state, the race would have been seriously depleted by this time, and in proportion to the success of Christianity in making converts would the destruction of the race have been assured. Paul did not have the race question in his thought at this time. If the world had come to an end as he expected, the race question would have been settled in that way. Settlement by nonpropagation did not come within Paul's horizon of thought in this epistle.

(2) We must remember that Paul is not attacking marriage, as some have thought, but he is defending celibacy from the attack of those who deemed it wrong or inhuman. What he says on this subject is of general validity to-day. The celibate state is the best for some work. We prefer to ask unmarried men to go into the army and navy. We prefer to send unmarried women into hospitals and out to frontier teaching and missionary posts. In exceptional cases we admire the man or the woman who from the high sense of duty and in the spirit of self-sacrifice or with the knowledge of hereditary diseases in the body or some weakness which ought not to be transmitted to posterity chooses some dangerous work with which marriage seems incompatible or devotes a lifetime to the prosecution of some noble aim with undivided attention and affection. Lord Bacon said, "Certainly, the best works and of greatest merit for the public have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men, who both in affection and means have married and endowed the public." The man who remains single because he is too lazy to work and support a family, or too selfish to share his interests with a wife, or too stingy to pay for a marriage license and buy furniture for housekeeping, Paul would have despised just as much as we do. Paul knew that the most of people would marry as long as

the world stood, and we feel sure that he would have advised them to marry if he had known that the world would stand through the next generation.

(3) Some of the expressions in this chapter may be understood better when we remember that in that age marriage was largely a matter of arrangement between the parents of the contracting parties, and sentiment did not play such a prominent part as in these modern times. A father disposed of his daughter in marriage, and sometimes the daughter had never seen her intended husband before marriage, and it was only in particular cases that the young people had become acquainted or had fallen in love with each other independently of their parents' action. That was not considered as necessary then as it is now.[20]

5. Meats Offered to Idols (8. 1 to 11. 1). Paul claimed liberty to eat meat at any time in any place. He would not exercise this liberty in such a way as to hurt his brother's conscience or endanger his brother's salvation. He lays down some common-sense rules of conduct and exhorts the Corinthians to do all to the glory of God, with due regard to the avoidance of occasions of stumbling.

6. A Question of Custom. The covering of the head and the celebration of the Lord's Supper (11. 2-34). It is noteworthy here that Paul decides against the Jewish custom, the custom of his own people, and favors the Greek practice of the men coming into the public service with uncovered head. The Lord's Supper is to be simply a memorial and not an ordinary or full course meal.

7. Spiritual Gifts and Their Relative Value (chapters 12-14). The charisms are diverse, but they come from the same Spirit. They are all intended to edify the whole Body of Christ. Prophesying is better than speaking with tongues. Love is the greatest of all. In the discussion of the decorum of public services Paul rules the women out of

[20] "Faces strange and tongues unknown
Make us by a bid their own." (Sophocles. Fragm. Terens.).

the duty or privilege of public speaking. "It is shameful for a woman to speak in a church." [21] We regard this as a local regulation and not of general application and not of any application to these modern times or these changed conditions or these different peoples. In the Corinth of that day it was the avowed prostitutes alone who were prominent in the public festivals, and it was too large a risk for the Christian women themselves to do anything which would lead to their identification in the popular mind with this class. It was wholly in their own behalf that Paul urged this precaution upon them. He would have lifted the proscription at once, we believe, in a different environment. He was jealous of the reputation of the church body; but he was altogether willing that anything should be done which was to the glory of God.

8. **The Gospel of the Resurrection** (chapter 15). Paul identifies the message of the resurrection with the gospel. They stand or fall together, in his mind. He gives the fullest discussion of the question to be found in the New Testament. He meets objections, builds up a masterly argument, and closes with a pæan of victory. The chapter is one of the most valuable in the sacred book.

9. **The Collection, and Closing Messages** (chapter 16). Notice the general order of these discussions in the epistle: (1) Ecclesiastical questions—divisions and discipline (chapters 1-6). (2) Moral questions—impurity, lawsuits, marriage, and meats (chapters 7-10). (3) Liturgical questions—costumes in church, the holy communion, spiritual gifts, the prohibition of women orators (chapters 11-14). (4) A dogmatic question—the resurrection (chapter 15).

VIII. Noteworthy Features of the Epistle

1. **Its Picture of the Early Church.** Weizsäcker says that we have here "a fragment which has no parallel in ecclesiastical history." The epistle is invaluable as a source

[21] 1 Cor. 14. 35.

of information concerning the conditions of primitive Christianity. It is a first-class historical authority. Nowhere else do we get so many details of the actual church life. If we are able to realize that life at all to-day, it is largely because of the aid given us in this epistle. Dean Stanley has said, "We are here, and (as far as the epistles are concerned) here only, allowed to witness the earliest conflict of Christianity with the culture and the vices of the ancient classical world." We learn more of the corporate life and the spiritual conflict of a young heathen-Christian church in this epistle than from all other sources combined. No more vivid and realistic picture could have been given us. We get more light upon the official government of the church and more upon the rules for the self-government of individuals in the church from this epistle than from any other book in the Bible. This makes it a most noteworthy book, to begin with.

2 **Its Practical Wisdom.** A characteristic feature of this epistle is its practical wisdom. The Epistle to the Romans is the preeminently theological epistle in the Pauline list. The First Epistle to the Corinthians is the preeminently practical epistle. Findlay calls it the epistle of the doctrine of the cross in application. Donald Fraser has written, "It says nothing of the law or justification, discusses no doctrine whatever save that of the resurrection, but treats in a masterly manner of love, purity, conscience, discernment, and reverence in the Church of God." [22]

3. **Its Pastoral Suggestiveness.** Bishop Warren declared, "No epistle should be more carefully studied by a modern pastor." [23] The reason for such a declaration has been well stated by Principal Robertson: "The two Epistles to the Corinthians are the most pastoral of the epistles. For details of pastoral work and organization, indeed, we go to

[22] Lectures on the Bible, vol. ii, p. 130.

[23] Iliff Studies, p. 34.

the letters to Timothy and Titus. But for the deep-seated principles, for the essential relations between pastor and peoples, for the conception of the apostolic office, and the nature of apostolical authority, these epistles are our primary sources. The questions touched upon in First Corinthians furnish a fair sample of the difficulties of church government; and as each is taken up in turn some deep-lying principle springs naturally to the apostle's lips, and is brought to bear with all its power upon the matter in hand. The letter is unique as an object-lesson in the bishopric of souls." [24]

4. **Its Greek Allusions.** As Dean Stanley has noted, "Here more than anywhere else in Paul's writings his allusions and illustrations are borrowed, not merely from Jewish customs and feelings, but from the literature, the amusements, the education, the worship of Greece and Rome." [25] Corinth was a Greek city, and the church was in a Greek environment. In this epistle Paul is a Greek to the Greeks. Note, for example, his references to the Greek games (9. 24-27). The Isthmian games were celebrated near Corinth and they included the five exercises of wrestling, leaping, throwing the discus, racing, and boxing. The contestants for the ten months preceding the games went into training, a prolonged period of abstinence and exercise. Before the final period of thirty days of training under the eye of the president the sacrifices were offered and each of the contestants took his oath that he was of pure Greek lineage and that he never had been convicted of any crime and that he never had been guilty of an act of impiety. All Greece went to this spectacle. The crown of parsley or pine leaves given to the victor in the contests was one of the most coveted honors in the land. Did Paul go to the games with the rest? Possibly he had the opportunity in the two years he was in Corinth, and probably it would not

[24] Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible, I, p. 489.

[25] Stanley, Epistles to the Corinthians, p. 4.

occur to him that he need have any conscientious scruples. He seems to have been an emancipated Jew at this point as well as at so many others. Anyway, he makes free allusion to the racing and the boxing of the Isthmian games, makes the abstinence and prolonged training of the contestants an example to the Christian, and contrasts their crown of perishable pine leaves with the Christian's reward.

5. Its Exaltation of Christ. In all of Paul's epistles Christ is exalted, but in no other epistle is the name of Christ introduced so continuously. Look at the beginning verses. In the first ten verses the name of Christ occurs ten times. It was Chrysostom who first pointed out the fact that Paul nails the Corinthians down to the name of Christ from the very start. He wants them to see at the very outset that Christ is all and in all, and that there is no room for any self-confidence except in him. He calls their attention to the name of Christ, the testimony of Christ, the revelation of Christ, the day of Christ, the fellowship of Christ. That is the most important thing in this epistle from the beginning to the end.

However, this exaltation of Christ does not prevent the clear presentation of his subordination to the Father in all things. Paul never has set forth that truth more clearly than in this epistle. "First we have the grand climax with which the third chapter closes: 'All are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.'[26] Again in the eleventh chapter, where Paul is regulating the attire of women in public worship, 'But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.'[27] And, lastly, in the fifteenth chapter, where the apostle turns seer, and transports us to the end of time, and a revelation, far more remarkable than any in the Apocalypse, is given us of the future mutual relations of the Persons of the Godhead,

[26] 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23.

[27] 1 Cor. 11. 3.

'And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected unto him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all.' " [28]

6. Its Condemnation of Personal Puffing. The self-inflated spirit is castigated in this epistle as nowhere else in the New Testament (see 4. 6, 18, 19; 5. 2; 8. 1; 13. 4; and 2 Cor. 12. 20). This term occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in Col. 2. 18.

7. Its Logical Order. In form this epistle is the most orderly and logical of Paul's epistles.

8. Its Style. The style is the most simple and direct to be found in the Pauline epistles. Plummer thinks that on the score of its style this epistle "should possibly be ranked first among Paul's writings," and he adds, "Possibly no such thought was in his mind; but the letter might convince the fastidious Greeks that in clearness of thought and power of language he was in no way inferior to the eloquent Apollos." [29]

IX. Authenticity of the Epistle

When Baur and the Tübingen school of critics decided against the authenticity of the other Pauline epistles, they still recognized as genuine First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans. These four epistles belong to the same period in Paul's life and are too well authenticated seriously to be questioned. First Corinthians is the first book in the New Testament to be cited by name in later literature. Before the end of the first century, about A. D. 95, Clement of Rome wrote to the Corinthians and quoted from this epistle several times. In chapter 47 he refers to it explicitly, as follows: "Take up the epistle of the blessed apostle Paul. What did he write to you at the time when the gospel first began to be preached? Truly, under the inspiration of the Spirit, he wrote to you concerning him-

[28] 1 Cor. 15. 28. White, Expositor, VI, ii, p. 19.

[29] Article in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.

self, and Cephas, and Apollos, because even then parties had been formed among you." Barnabas, Hermas, Ignatius, Polycarp, the Epistle to Diognetus, the Teaching of the Twelve all bear witness to the acquaintance of the early church with the language and the teaching of this epistle. The testimony of the early authorities is clear and full and unquestionable. The external evidence to the authenticity of First Corinthians is all that could be expected or desired.

However, if the external evidence were less satisfactory than it is, the internal evidence would be sufficient to guarantee the epistle. Paley, Beet, Godet, McClymont, and others point out the fact that the Corinthians never would have acknowledged and preserved an epistle which so plainly set forth and rebuked their own faults if they had not been assured of its apostolic authority. The many references to Paul's own movements, the intimate knowledge of the internal condition of the church, the many points of coincidence with the book of the Acts and other writings in the New Testament combine to prove its incontestable genuineness.

CHAPTER VI

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

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I. Contrast Between the First and Second Epistle

1. Schmiedel says that "in passing from First to Second Corinthians one feels like passing from a park with paths intersecting but easily discernible into a pathless or trackless forest." First Corinthians has clear divisions of thought, and its separate sections are well marked out from each other. Second Corinthians is filled with a jumble of emotions and a veritable jungle of interlacing and almost impenetrable passions and affections and fervors. In First Corinthians everything is written down decently and in order. In Second Corinthians there is chaos come again. First Corinthians is the most systematic of the Pauline epistles. Second Corinthians is the least systematic of them all.

2. First Corinthians deals with a larger number of topics, and these topics are more varied and cover a wider range of interest than is represented in any other epistle of Paul. Second Corinthians has only one theme, with one parenthesis in the middle of it.

3. First Corinthians tells us more about the inside history of the early church, its troubles and its triumphs, its practices and its principles, than we can learn from any other book in the New Testament. Second Corinthians tells us more about the heart history and the inmost character of the apostle Paul than any other source of information we have. Here we see his passionate soul in its twofold aspect of sensitiveness and affection, on the one hand, and defiance and resolution on the other. Anxious, suffering, plead-

ing, expostulating, Paul wears his heart on his sleeve in this epistle. We come to know the man here as nowhere else. We study First Corinthians to know the church; we study Second Corinthians to know the church's greatest apostle.

II. The General Theme

The Second Epistle to the Corinthians is Paul's *"Apologia pro Vita Sua."* He had been slandered and he here sets himself to make reply to his critics and to make it clear to all the church that his motives have been of the purest throughout. All good men are likely to be slandered. God himself was slandered, according to the story of the garden of Eden.[1] Eve said to the serpent, "Of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." Then the serpent said to Eve: "He lied to you and deceived you. You shall not surely die. He simply wanted to frighten you. He knew that in the day that you ate thereof your eyes would be opened, and you would be as God, knowing good and evil." The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says that it is impossible for God to lie,[2] and we believe it. We believe that he is the God of all truth and that his word can be trusted in everything. We believe that the serpent of the Genesis narrative was a liar and the father of lies. We believe that he basely slandered the God of all truth when he said what he did to Eve.

Jesus was slandered. They said of him, "He has a devil." They called the Master Beelzebub. They accused him again and again of blasphemy and Sabbath-breaking and unconcealed sympathy with sin. They expelled him from their coasts. They would have thrown him over the mountain cliff. They harried him from city to city and from place to place. They arrested him at last with swords and staves

[1] Gen. 3. 3–5.
[2] Heb. 6. 18.

and a multitude of men, as though he had been a thief or a public malefactor. They taunted him and they beat him for a night and a day. Then they took him to Golgotha and nailed him to a tree, and there they reviled him through the slow hours of his agony with the diabolical ingenuity of malicious jest till in the earthquake and the darkness his spirit was committed to God. He was slandered and maligned through all his public ministry. In all probability the last word he ever heard as he hung on the cross was some slanderous epithet.

"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his teacher, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household!" [3] As long as there are evil men in the world good men are sure to be slandered. If God could not escape, and if Jesus could not escape, the children of God and the disciples of Jesus may not hope to escape. Job was a good man, but he was slandered horribly by his best friends. Joseph was a good man, but he was accused of criminal assault. Moses was a meek man, but he was accused of lording it over the people. Ahab slandered Elijah, and Shimei slandered David. Athanasius thought the whole world was against him. Martin Luther was depicted by his enemies as a veritable monster of iniquity.

John Wesley was called a defamer, a reviler, a liar, a bigot, an Ishmaelite, at the very time when his holy life and his powerful preaching were raising up a people to herald the second Reformation and under the name of Methodists were preparing them to carry the gospel of God's power to the poor of every land. What was John Wesley doing that they should apply to him such names? He was spreading scriptural holiness throughout all England, and that occasioned the torrent of abuse. The tradition is that one day

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[3] Matt. 10. 24, 25.

John Wesley said to his churchmembers, "Brethren, I have been charged with all the crimes in the catalogue, with only one exception as far as I know, and that is the crime of drunkenness; no one ever has accused me of that." Then a woman stood up in the congregation and said, "You old hypocrite, you know that you were drunk last night." "Bless the Lord!" said John Wesley, "the catalogue is now complete!" Even in our day we have seen John Wesley's picture published by the liquor dealers of America as an advertisement, and they have claimed that he was a patron and an adviser of the use of wine and beer! The falsity of slander scarcely could find a better illustration than that.

When Spurgeon was the greatest gospel preacher in the world he was a target for the slanders of the press. The papers said that he was a pulpit buffoon, and that he had pictured the sinner's quick descent into hell by straddling his pulpit rail and sliding down it into the congregation. The devil and his imps are busy all the time in the manufacture of wholesale slanders of the righteous. No good man need be surprised if he encounters them. It would rather be to his discredit if all men spoke well of him. For the most part evil men speak well only of their own kind. Paul had been slandered, and in this epistle he makes answer to these slanders. Some of the things which his enemies were saying about him may have had a measure of truth in them, but for the most part they were utterly false, and Paul sets himself to make that perfectly clear. What were these charges made against Paul and diligently circulated in the church at Corinth? We will make a list of them, as we find them suggested in this epistle.

III. Slanders Against Paul and His Answers to Them

There is only one quotation from Paul's enemies, explicitly designated as such, in this epistle, and it occurs in 10. 10; but throughout the epistle there are words and phrases

which doubtless are taken from their oral or written charges against him. We begin with one in the direct quotation.

1. **As to His Personal Appearance.** (1) "They say . . . His bodily presence is weak."[4] Paul's enemies were saying: "He is little and insignificant in appearance. He does not compare with many of these other leaders who are tall and straight and command respectful attention even as they walk the public streets. It would be well to have a man at the head of our church who will be an ornament to it as he stands in the pulpit, a man as good-looking as any of the sophists and rhetoricians and philosophers in Corinth. As for this Paul, people laugh at him. These Greeks who are accustomed to the perfect physique of their statuary and their art and to the ideal human form as developed by their athletes and their warriors simply turn up their noses at this comical crooked Jewish dwarf. Nor is his personal appearance the worst of it."

(2) "He affects to be abject in his bearing. He is very lowly in our presence.[5] He abases himself more than is necessary even for a man who looks as he does.[6] He might carry himself with some dignity at least; but he chooses to crouch and to cringe and to curry favor by an extravagant show of humility which overreaches itself and makes him seem contemptible."

What does Paul say to these things? He makes no direct reply to the statement that his bodily presence is weak. He is silent concerning that remark, as unworthy of any discussion. No man can add anything to his stature, and he is not responsible for that. It is his duty to make the best of the body he has, and neither he nor anybody else ought to complain if he is doing that. Paul does suggest that a man ought to be judged by his heart and his spirit and his life rather than by the appearance of his face or his head or his

[4] 2 Cor. 10. 10.
[5] 2 Cor. 10. 1.
[6] 2 Cor. 11. 7.

back or his legs. He says, "Ye look at the things that are before your face.[7] Ye are of the ones who glory in appearance and not in heart.[8] That is no valid method of judgment. A wolf in sheep's clothing is no sheep. Satan himself can appear like an angel of light.[9] A man is to be valued by his inner character and not by his outer appearance. His head may be bald on the outside when it is not bald within. His back may be crooked and his legs may be crooked and his nose may be crooked when his life and Christian experience may be as steady as a clock and as straight as a string. The man who glories in his apparel and his appearance may not be so careful about his conduct and his character.

"Which is the better standard of judgment, good clothes or good deeds? Which is the more glory to a man, a shapely body or a shining soul? Men ought to be judged, not by their looks, but by their lives. Let those who will preach the gospel of the glory of good looks; we preach the gospel of the glory of Christ.[10] Does any one misinterpret our humility and call us abject? We console ourselves with the thought that it is the abject whom God comforts.[11] Do they call us weak in appearance and everything else? God's power is made perfect in weakness.[12] If we must needs glory, we will glory of the things that concern our weakness.[13] We take pleasure in weaknesses for Christ's sake; for when we are weak, then are we strong." [14]

Paul knew that he could do nothing in and of himself; but he knew that he could do all things in Christ. His sense of lack in his own ability at any point was counterbalanced by his faith in the ability of Christ at all points. His humility was not manifested in any abjection before men but in whole-hearted subjection to his Lord. He

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[7] 2 Cor. 10. 7.
[8] 2 Cor. 5. 12.
[9] 2 Cor. 11. 14.
[10] 2 Cor. 4. 4.
[11] 2 Cor. 7. 6.
[12] 2 Cor. 12. 9.
[13] 2 Cor. 11. 30; 12. 5.
[14] 2 Cor. 12. 10.

was weak in the flesh and correspondingly strong in the spirit. He was humble and considerate in his demeanor toward men, because he was meek and lowly in heart, like his Lord. Like his Lord he was misunderstood and maligned.

2. **As to His Speech.** (1) They said that Paul was "rude in speech." [15] His preaching was very commonplace. His speaking was that of a very ordinary person. It was contemptible as compared with that of Apollos and other leaders in the church.

(2) They said that "his speech was of no account." [16] It was not only rude in construction but poor in substance. It amounted to nothing. The form of his speech was uncouth and the matter of it was worthless. Cicero declares that the Greeks cared not for what one said, but how one said it.[17] These enemies of Paul attacked his preaching on both grounds. They liked neither the manner nor the matter of his speech. Who was this Paul anyway? He was an ignorant tentmaker, who never had learned the rules of the schools and who did not observe the commonest forms of rhetoric. The Christian church never could expect to win many of the wise and the noble, the sophists and the rhetoricians and the philosophers, unless it approached them in a spirit and a style different from that of Paul. He might reach the poorer classes, the slaves and the common laborers, but nothing could be done in the upper classes of society by a man with such methods and speech. His speech was rude and of no account.

Now what was the fact of the case? Was Paul an orator? It depends altogether upon our definition of an orator. If we define an orator as one who sits down and carefully constructs orations, one who observes the rules of rhetoric, one who polishes his periods, one who indulges in

[15] 2 Cor. 11. 6.

[16] 2 Cor. 10. 10.

[17] Pro Flacco, 4, 5.

ornaments of speech and fanciful flourishes, one who practices the arts of eloquence, then Paul was not an orator. He avoided oratory in that sense on principle. He neither imposed upon men with any display of erudition nor did he dazzle them with rhetorical arts. He said to these Corinthians, "And I, brethren, when I came unto you, I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. . . . My speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom." [18] Bernhard Weiss remarks upon these statements that "Paul refused to weaken the divine power of the gospel by mixing it with human wisdom and rhetoric." He did not set out to please people by persuasive oratory. His only aim was to set before them the unvarnished truth.

However, if we define an orator as a great soul on fire with a great cause, then Paul was an orator. Longinus, the rhetorician, made a list of the great orators, and he put Paul first among them. One of the great American orators has said, "The world has not seen Paul's equal as an orator, and the earth still vibrates with his speech." Paul said to the Corinthians, "My speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom," but he immediately added that they were "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." [19] His preaching might not be polished but it was powerful. It brought results. People were converted wherever he went. He says, "The weapons of our warfare are mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." [20]

Was his speech rude? The common people heard him gladly. Did it amount to nothing? Possibly, yes, judged by the rules of the school; but, surely, no, judged by results.

[18] 1 Cor. 2. 1, 4.
[19] 1 Cor. 2. 4.
[20] 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.

They themselves were his converts. They themselves were his witnesses that "God had made him sufficient as a minister of the new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."[21] Paul had an eloquence all his own, the eloquence of intense conviction and overwhelming enthusiasm and thoroughgoing consecration to his cause. His written words have stirred the hearts of millions, and have lost none of their power to move men through all the centuries and down to the present day; and, surely, the burning phrases which touch us now must have fallen like hot flame upon the souls who first heard them. They must have been reproved and judged. Their consciences must have been smitten. The secrets of their hearts were made manifest. Their eyes were opened to see the beauty and the power in the gospel of Christ. They must have fallen on their faces and worshiped God, and acknowledged in the very depths of their being that this was indeed a messenger of the Most High.[22]

They heard Paul saying:

"What was their sweet desire and subtle yearning,
Lovers, and women whom their song enrolls?
Faint to the flame which in my breast is burning,
Less than the love wherewith I ache for souls.

"Christ! I am Christ's! and let the name suffice you,
Ay, for me too he greatly hath sufficed:
Lo with no winning words I would entice you,
Paul has no honor and no friend but Christ."[23]

They heard his testimony and his exhortation and their hearts were won and their reasons were convinced and their lives were transformed by the demonstration of the spirit and the power in all he had to say. Paul was an orator,

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[21] 2 Cor. 3. 6.
[22] 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25.
[23] Myers, Saint Paul, pp. 1, 2.

judged by the results of his speaking upon the minds and the hearts and the lives of men. He did not depend upon the form of his presentation of the truth, but he had absolute confidence in the power of the truth itself to commend it to all prepared people. What answer does Paul make to these charges concerning his lack of rhetoric and the valuelessness of his speech? Just one. He says, "Though I be rude in speech, yet am I not in knowledge; nay, in every way have we made this manifest unto you in all things." [24] He would ignore the criticism of his style, but he would aver that the content of his preaching was all right. His method of presenting the truth might be defective; he would not argue that. But it was *the truth* he had to present; that must be acknowledged on every hand. His rhetoric might be faulty, but his knowledge was not.

Let everybody agree that he had preached the truth, and they might say what else they pleased about the preaching. He was concerned only with the favorable reception of his message, and therefore he was not concerned with the establishment of any personal reputation for eloquence. The truth was mighty and would prevail. Let him be known as a preacher of the truth, and that would suffice him. Paul was a propagandist. He was more interested in the success of his mission than he was in any personal renown. Knowledge he had, knowledge of the saving truth in Christ. It was all-essential that they should believe that. It was not essential that they should approve his manner of speech.

3. **As to His Authority.** (1) They said he was a nobody.[25] Paul calls himself "a child untimely born, . . . the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle." [26] His enemies took him at his word. They repeated it as literal truth. Who was he anyway? Where

[24] 2 Cor. 11. 6.

[25] 2 Cor. 12. 11.

[26] 1 Cor. 15. 8, 9.

had he come from? Who had given him any authority to preach? He was an upstart, self-appointed to this work.

(2) "He never had seen Christ in the flesh.[27] He never had been a disciple of Jesus. Jesus had appointed twelve apostles while he was here upon the earth and Paul had not been among them. Where, then, did he get his authority? Not from Jesus."

(3) "He had no commendatory letters from the mother church at Jerusalem or from any member of the apostolic college there. Where, then, did he get his authority, if not from Jesus and not from the apostles, who were the authorities in the church? He had no credentials of any kind.[28] No one had given him any letters of introduction or of commendation. No church body had indorsed him in this way. Nobody ever had seen his papers. Who was sure that he ever had been ordained?" What followed from all of these facts?

(4) "Paul was no true apostle. He held no commission from the constituted apostolate. Their standing was an unquestioned and unquestionable one. They were out-and-out apostles. Paul could not boast of any such position as theirs."

To these charges Paul makes resolute and characteristic answer. "Am I a nobody? It may be that I am; but I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostle.[29] Whatever I am I am not inferior to them. It may be true that I have not known Christ after the flesh, but I deny that that is essential to apostleship. Christ is risen and has gone to the right-hand of the throne. No apostle knows him after the flesh now. If they did so know him, they know him so no more.[30] We all are alike at that point. We stand on the same plane. It does not follow that because I was not one of the original twelve I may not be commissioned by Christ. I am an apostle, not

[27] 2 Cor. 5. 16.
[28] 2 Cor. 3. 1.
[29] 2 Cor. 11. 5.
[30] 2 Cor. 5. 16.

from men, neither through man, but by the direct call of the risen Jesus.[31] He called me to be a chosen vessel, to bear his name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel.[32] I am as much an apostle of Christ as any man. The Lord has given me my authority.[33] The Lord has given me all the approval I need. Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.[34] I need no letters of introduction or of commendation from the apostles at Jerusalem. I give commendatory letters myself. Do we need, as some, epistles of commendation to you or from you? Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men; being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh.[35] If anybody ask me for my credentials I can point to my Corinthian converts, and say, There are my first and second and twenty-second and a hundred and second Corinthian epistles; read them and find out what sort of a man and what sort of a missionary I am. The out-and-out apostles have nothing to boast of that I may not claim as well as they. Where do I lack? In the signs of an apostle? Truly, the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works.[36] In the labors of an apostle? I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.[37] In the lineage of an apostle? Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.[38] In the sufferings of an apostle? I was in labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save

[31] Gal. 1. 1.
[32] Acts 9. 15.
[33] 2 Cor. 10. 8.
[34] 2 Cor. 10. 18.
[35] 2 Cor. 3. 1–3.
[36] 2 Cor. 12. 12.
[37] 1 Cor. 15. 10.
[38] 2 Cor. 11. 22.

one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things which are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches.[39] It is not in visions and revelations that I lack. It is not expedient that a man should boast of such things, but I have had as wonderful visions and revelations as any man.[40] I can boast too, though I feel like a fool in doing it.[41] I am become foolish: ye compelled me; for I ought to have been commended by you: for in nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I am as you say, a nobody."[42]

4. As to His Teaching. (1) "He teaches a most obscure doctrine. There is something veiled and hidden about it.[43] He talks about the gospel mystery, and there surely is something very mysterious about it."[44]

(2) "He professes a great reverence for the law and yet he preaches the abrogation of the law. Surely, that is handling the word of God deceitfully.[45] That is greeting it with a kiss of reverence and betraying it to the death at the same time."

(3) "He corrupts the word of God.[46] His exegesis is most original, and the more original it is the less reliable it ought to be considered."

(4) "He preaches no true gospel and no true Jesus.[47] Jesus obeyed the whole law. He was circumcised, and so

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[39] 2 Cor. 11. 23–28.
[40] 2 Cor. 12. 1–4.
[41] 2 Cor. 11. 21, 23.
[42] 2 Cor. 12. 11.
[43] 2 Cor. 4. 3.
[44] 1 Cor. 2. 7.
[45] 2 Cor. 4. 2.
[46] 2 Cor. 2. 17.
[47] 2 Cor. 11. 4.

were all of the true apostles. Anyone who preaches that circumcision is nothing and that it is not necessary to membership in the Christian Church does not represent Jesus and the apostles in that teaching. It is another gospel than the one taught by them. We preach another Jesus and a different Spirit and a different gospel, and our gospel is the only true and original one."

(5) "He preaches himself and not Christ.[48] He thinks he knows more than all the other leaders in the church. He exalts his authority above that of Peter and of Jesus himself. He is a propagandist, but he is propagating his own notions and not the teachings of Jesus." Paul enters a curt denial of all of these statements. "We have renounced the hidden things of shame, not handling the word of God deceitfully.[49] We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.[50] We are not as the many, corrupting the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ.[51] Why should anyone think that my gospel is a veiled gospel? Moses put a veil upon his face, but the face of Christ is not veiled. This is our gospel, that we with unveiled faces beholding the glory of the Lord are transformed into the same image from glory to glory.[52] That gospel is not veiled, except in those that perish, whose minds the god of this world has blinded." [53]

We now have seen how the enemies of Paul have charged that his appearance was weak and abject, and his speech was rude and of no account, and he had no authority either from Jesus or the Jerusalem apostles, no letters of recommendation, and no legitimate reason for boasting, and his teaching was obscure and selfish, perverting the written Word, and presenting no true gospel. To all of these charges Paul can make answer without much vehemence

[48] 2 Cor. 4. 5.
[49] 2 Cor. 4. 2.
[50] 2 Cor. 4. 5.
[51] 2 Cor. 2. 17.
[52] 2 Cor. 3. 18.
[53] 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.

of feeling. He is not much concerned about his appearance or his speech or his authorization, and his preaching or teaching may be left to approve itself. If the complaints and the charges of his enemies had stopped at this point, Paul might not have regarded them as worthy of very serious consideration. However, his opponents went farther and attacked his personal character. That was a different matter, and all the energy of Paul's nature is aroused to make adequate answer to these personal slanders.

5. **As to His Character.** (1) They said that Paul was fickle and unreliable. He announced a certain plan of action and then changed it. He evidently was uncertain in his own mind and insincere in his promises. The weakness of his character was manifest in the frequency of change in his plans. Now he said, Yes, and now he said, No; and you never could tell what he would say next.[54] Paul replied that he had good reason for changing his plans for his visit. It was a desire to spare them that prompted the new program.[55] It was all meant in kindness to them. His word to them was not Yes and No. Let them recall his preaching and all of his conduct among them. Had it not been consistent throughout? Did it not all bear one stamp? Had not God established his word among them, and given it something of the character of God's own immutability?[56] God was not fickle, and no more was he.

(2) "The reason for his change of plans was his cowardice. He did not dare to come. He had threatened supernatural punishment but he was unwilling to put his powers to a test at that point. He would not venture to make good his great swelling words. It was all sheet lightning. It never struck a blow. He thundered from a safe distance, but he was a bully and a coward and he did not come near when there was a chance for a fight. His letters are

[54] 2 Cor. 1. 15–17.
[55] 2 Cor. 1. 23.
[56] 2 Cor. 1. 18–22.

weighty and strong; but his bodily presence is weak." [57] To this Paul replied, "I will answer in person the charge that I dare not come, and if I come again, I will not spare.[58] Have I terrified you with my letters? I will show you when I get there that what I am in word by letter when I am absent, such I am also in deed when present." [59]

(3) "He still was walking according to the flesh.[60] Did not Saul the persecutor set out to abolish the Christian Church by armed force? This Paul, the would-be apostle, has the same spirit. He is threatening violence still. He is warring with carnal weapons still." Paul makes a flat denial of this statement. "Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh; but they are mighty to the casting down of all opposing forces." [61]

(4) "He is full of everlasting self-assertion. His letters are crowded with his boastings. He glories in his usurped authority.[62] He uses that authority in a lordly fashion to cast others down.[63] He is so arrogant as to be regardless of the feelings of others, and therefore he takes occasion to wound us in all of his letters. He is a braggart and he always is talking about himself. He commends himself because nobody else recommends him." [64] Paul enters denial again. "We do not commend ourselves; the Lord commends us.[65] But how about these men who are saying these things? Are they not commending themselves and measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves with themselves? Are they not glorying beyond their measure? Are they not stretching themselves overmuch? It is very easy for them to come down with letters of recommendation from Jerusalem and live comfortably with their

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[57] 2 Cor. 10. 10.
[58] 2 Cor. 13. 1, 2.
[59] 2 Cor. 10. 9, 11.
[60] 2 Cor. 10. 2.
[61] 2 Cor. 10. 3–6.
[62] 2 Cor. 10. 8, 15.
[63] 2 Cor. 10. 8; 13. 10.
[64] 2 Cor. 3. 1; 5. 12; 10. 18.
[65] 2 Cor. 10. 18.

adherents among my converts. I have been a pioneer missionary, and I have not lived comfortably at any time. It would seem that they are obtrusive and arrogant, and not I."[66]

(5) "He is crafty, and you cannot trust him. He will deceive you, and catch you by guile."[67] How often we have heard this passage quoted as if it came from the mouth of the apostle Paul himself! "Being crafty, I caught you with guile." With this supposedly Pauline authority behind them how many people have resorted to deceptive means to gain good ends! They have been crafty when they ought to have been as open and honest as their Lord. They have been full of guile when they ought to have been as guileless as Nathanael if they could expect the approval of their Lord. This is no confession, no personal testimony on the part of the apostle Paul. It is a vile slander which he quotes from the lips of his foes, and he quotes it only to confute it. He says: "What you say is not true that, being crafty, I caught you with guile. Did I catch you with guile? Did I take advantage of you in any way? Did I take advantage of you by any one of them whom I have sent unto you? Tell me, did I? Your own consciences must answer you that I did not. I sent Titus to you. Did Titus catch you with guile? Did Titus take any advantage of you? Walked we not in the same spirit? Walked we not in the same steps?[68] I am no liar.[69] Neither was Titus. We have no use for craftiness. The serpent beguiled Eve in craftiness.[70] We are not following after him. We believe that craftiness is devilish, and no Christian will have anything to do with it. We are striving to incarnate and to recommend the simplicity which is in Christ, not the double-dealing which is in the devil. We preach purity of motive and purity of speech and purity of life. Guile and

[66] 2 Cor. 10. 12–18.
[67] 2 Cor. 12. 16.
[68] 2 Cor. 12. 16–18.
[69] 2 Cor. 11. 31.
[70] 2 Cor. 11. 3.

craftiness are the characteristics of Satan and not of our Saviour or of any of his followers. You accuse me of being crafty and catching people with guile; but I tell you that we have renounced all the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."[71]

These statements surely are clear enough to make Paul's position plain. Does anyone suppose that he would say, "We have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness," and in the same epistle would confess, "Being crafty, I caught you with guile"? Paul is not capable of such a flat contradiction. The latter statement is quoted from the slanderous tongues which were wagging behind the apostle's back there at Corinth, and they ought to be put into quotation marks, as the remainder of the epistle plainly shows. Paul had written to the Thessalonians, "Our exhortation is not in guile,"[72] and what was true of his ministry in Thessalonica was equally true of it everywhere. Paul agrees with Peter, who quotes from the psalmist in his epistle,

> He that would love life,
> And see good days,
> Let him refrain his tongue from evil,
> And his lips that they speak no guile,[73]

and who says of the Christ that he left us an example, that we should follow his steps, who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth,[74] and who exhorts all Christians therefore to put away all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies.[75] If anyone wants to indulge in craft and in guile, they must go somewhere else than to Paul or to Peter or to Christ for an indorsement of their procedure.

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[71] 2 Cor. 4. 2.
[72] 1 Thess. 2. 3.
[73] 1 Pet. 3. 10.
[74] 1 Pet. 2. 21, 22.
[75] 1 Pet. 2. 1.

Paul renounced and denounced all such things. It was the basest kind of slander which said he indulged in anything of the kind.

(6) "What is he doing with all his money which he is collecting? He says that it is for the poor at Jerusalem, but who knows? He pretends to work for his living, and he refuses to take any salary from you; but may it not be possible that he gets his salary indirectly in this manner? He and his accomplices may be fleecing you for their own benefit. He may be an embezzler, and this money may never get any farther than his own pocket. He is a Jew, and the Jews are notorious for their love of money. Why should we consider him an exception at this point?" [76] This must have cut Paul to the heart. Money-raising was the most disagreeable part of his work, and to have it made the basis of such slanders against him must have seemed cruel indeed. It was hard to ask these people for money in the first place. They were poor, and it was out of their poverty that they must contribute. They had made many sacrifices for the cause already. It was hard to ask them to give of their scanty means for the help of brethren they never had seen and to whom their obligation may not have seemed very clear. Paul must have grudged all the time he gave to money-raising. It was so much time lost to preaching and to the work he enjoyed much more. Now that a considerable sum was in hand, there were those who were insinuating that he was appropriating it for himself. They were suspicious in the matter; and he hastens to assure them all that he has taken especial pains to avoid any occasion for blame in the matter of the bounty which was ministered by them, taking thought for things honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.[77] Such precautions had been taken beforehand as to render harmless any such accusations as these. Paul had

[76] 2 Cor. 12. 16–19; 8. 20–23.

[77] 2 Cor. 8. 20.

foreseen them and forestalled them by such arrangements as safeguarded both the collection and his reputation.

Paul was a practical man and he was not likely to be caught in any loose business methods. The books were open to inspection. The guarantors were at hand. Anybody could satisfy himself that Paul was uncompromised in this matter. His conscience was clear. His proofs were readily available. He must have felt all the more the essential meanness of the insinuations against him. It was true that he had not asked any personal help or received any personal salary from them. The reason for that was that he did not care to burden them.[78] It was a great burden to him—the necessity for self-support. It hindered the free exercise of his missionary powers. It was a continual sacrifice which he made in their behalf. He would not benumb them. The verb in the Greek suggests the paralyzing shock given by a torpedo fish. He would not paralyze their faith or their Christian enthusiasm by any appeals for money for himself. He had done everything possible to avoid any suspicion of covetousness on his part. He always had taught and he had believed that covetousness was radically unchristian. The Master became poor that others might be enriched; and he had followed the Master's example and had been willing to be and to remain poor for their sakes. Yet at this very point where he always had been most careful his motives now were attacked and impugned. Could perverse malice go any farther than that? Yes, it went one or two steps farther.

(7) Paul's enemies said, "Evidently his mind has been affected. There is a trace of madness in his visions and revelations. What he calls faith is reckless folly. This holy zeal of his is merely eccentricity. He is a good deal of a fool. Much that he says is foolish. Much of his conduct is foolishness."[79] In the passages cited, Paul

[78] 2 Cor. 11. 9; 12. 14, 16.

[79] 2 Cor. 5. 13; 11. 16–19; 12. 6, 11.

makes ironical reference to their charges. "Am I beside myself? It is unto God. Am I a fool? Then bear with me; as a fool receive me. Have I become foolish? It is because you have compelled me." There was just one further step for Paul's enemies to take.

(8) They said: "He manifestly is forsaken of God. The persecutions he encounters everywhere are a proof of that fact. In his bodily afflictions he carries about with him the manifest token of God's displeasure with him. The opposition he stirs up among the people of God wherever he goes is in itself a guarantee that God has set himself against him." [80] What does Paul say to this? "Our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.[81] It is true that I have a thorn in the flesh and that I have besought the Lord thrice that I might be rid of it; but he has given me to understand that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and that his grace will be sufficient for me.[82] Therefore, though I may be pressed on every side, I am not straitened; though I may be perplexed, I am not in despair; though I may be pursued, I am not, as you say, forsaken; I am smitten down, but not destroyed.[83] These things which you call the marks of God's displeasure I call the marks of the Lord Jesus. My body had been branded with them.[84] My ministry has been filled with them. In much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, as you slanderously call us, and yet true; as unknown, a nobody with no credentials as you say of us, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things, we commend ourself as a

[80] 2 Cor. 4. 7–17; 12. 7–10.
[81] 2 Cor. 4. 16.
[82] 2 Cor. 12. 7, 9.
[83] 2 Cor. 4. 8, 9.
[84] Gal. 6. 17.

true minister of God and a true disciple of Jesus instead of one forsaken by him and under the ban of his displeasure.[85] If any man trusteth in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again with himself, that, even as he is Christ's, so also are we.[86] We have every reason to be sure that we are approved by him. We find that assurance all-sufficient for our need."

Here, then, are the slanders which have led to the writing of this epistle. His enemies said of Paul that, as to person, he was weak and contemptible; as to his speech, it was rude and of no account; as to his authority, it was very questionable, as he has no credentials from Jesus or the apostles, and he must be an upstart and no true apostle; as to his teaching, it is obscure, corrupt, selfish, and untrue; as to his personal character, he is unreliable, cowardly, carnal, boastful, crafty, possibly an embezzler, often beside himself, and surely forsaken of God. People who did not know Paul, and who heard these things said about him, must have come to the conclusion that he was a vile impostor, branded in body, of insane mind, of impure motives, and of an utterly perverted and selfish heart. People who knew Paul, and who heard these things said about him, must have come to the conclusion that fiendish malice could have gone no farther in misrepresentation of him.

We close this study of the slanders against Paul with some practical conclusions:

1. The key to the interpretation of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians is to be found in the proper use of quotation marks. There were no quotation marks in the original manuscript; and there did not need to be, for everybody concerned would recognize the phrases and sayings of Paul's enemies whenever they occurred in the epistle. There are no quotation marks in any of our oldest manuscripts and there are none in our English versions; and this be-

[85] 2 Cor. 6. 4–10.

[86] 2 Cor. 10. 7

comes a more serious matter, for after the centuries the words and phrases and sentences quoted from his slanderers by Paul are not so clearly definable by us as they were by the Corinthians, and the result has been that in many instances these slanders have come to be accepted as truths uttered by Paul concerning himself!

One glaring illustration of the absurdity and the iniquity of such a conclusion is to be seen in 12. 16, where Paul is commonly supposed to have said, "Being crafty, I caught you with guile"! We have seen how utterly opposed such a conclusion is to the whole tenor of Paul's teaching and to the whole testimony of his life. The words ought to be put into quotation marks and thus to be designated as a slander of his enemies to which Paul proceeds to make a definite denial, and then the passage becomes easy of interpretation. The same thing is true in every chapter of the epistle. We need to remember that Paul is writing in self-defense, and that he is quoting continually what has been said about him and making direct and indirect answer to the charges of his foes. The judicious insertion of quotation marks throughout this epistle would do more to make its meaning clear than any other help we could devise. The marking of quoted words, phrases, and sentences would illuminate the text and make the epistle seem like another and a new epistle.

2. The most consistent life and the purest motives may be misconstrued and maligned. Did Paul work night and day to relieve these Corinthians from the necessity of his support? There were those who said that he did it because he felt that he was no true apostle and therefore did not dare to burden them with his maintenance. Did Paul walk in all humility of apostolic service? There were those who said that he was abasing himself. Did he narrate his sufferings and his persecutions for the cause of Christ in such a way as should have touched a heart of stone? There were those who said that he was boasting and forever com-

mending himself. Was he lenient in his treatment of wrongdoers? They said that he was cowardly. Was he justly severe upon wrongdoing? They said that he was arrogant and overbearing and tyrannical. Did he change his plans? They said that he was unreliable and insincere and a deceiver. Did he sacrifice himself to the taking up of a collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem? There were those who hinted that that collection never would reach its destination. Did he lay aside his natural reserve and admit them to the Holy of holies of his personal experience and tell them of visions and revelations from the Lord? There were those who suggested at once that he was not quite sane. Did he undergo such perils as were not equaled even in that heroic age of the church? There were some who said that all his afflictions proved that he was reprobated of God. Did he tell these slanderers what he thought about them and give them the tongue-lashing which they richly deserved? Then they said that he was too passionate to be an apostle of the patient Christ. It would have made no difference what Paul did, they would have found fault with it. He could have done nothing which they would not have maligned and twisted into its opposite character. The only thing for a servant of Christ to do when he is beset by such people is to trust in God and go ahead and hope and pray for his own vindication.

3. Sometimes it may be best simply to ignore personal slanders, in the spirit of that inscription over the gateway to Marischal College at Aberdeen: "They say! What do they say? Well, let them say!" Sometimes, however, other than personal interests are involved, and it may be an injury to the cause we represent if we keep silent concerning malicious lies about us. Then it is our duty to make the answer of a good conscience toward God, even as Paul does here. Paul stands upon his defense. There is no egotism in this epistle. It is a manly utterance throughout. All the glorying here is glorying in the Lord. Paul sets down these

sayings of his slanderers and then puts over against them the facts of his teaching and life. There he leaves the case, in the spirit of that old Roman who said, "My accuser says that I have taken bribes from the enemy. I, M. Æmilius Scaurus, deny it. *Utri creditis, Quirites?*—Which of the two do you believe, gentlemen?" It was a saying of the Jewish rabbis, "There are three crowns; the crown of the Law, the crown of the priesthood, and the crown of royalty; but the crown of a good name mounts above them all" [87] It is the crown of his good name which Paul here snatches from those who would fling it into the dust. There is much which is personal in this reply to his critics; and that makes the epistle doubly valuable to us. We get an insight into the heart of the apostle which no other of his writings can give us.

IV. The Main Divisions of the Epistle

There are three of these. Chapters 8 and 9 have a distinct theme, and they separate the preceding chapters from those which follow them. Godet suggests that the three divisions of the epistle thus made refer in order to the past, the present, and the future. Zahn agrees, "The three sections of the letter treat respectively the immediate past with its misunderstandings and explanations, the present with its practical problems, and the near future with its anxieties." [88]

1. **Chapters 1-7. Personal Vindication of His Ministry.** Paul would gain the sympathy and the affection of his Corinthian converts. He reminds them how much he has suffered in their behalf, and how anxious he always is for their welfare. There is an undercurrent of indignation in all he says. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 show how the ministry of the New Testament excels that of the old covenant in glory, and in his description of the New Testament min-

[87] Pirke, Avoth., iv, 19.

[88] Introduction to the New Testament, vol. i, p. 312.

istry Paul sets forth his own feelings and convictions, his trials and his consolations as a minister of the gospel of Christ. There are many fine passages in these chapters; as, for example: 1. 3, the God of all comfort; 2. 14, continual triumph in Christ; 3. 17, liberty in the Spirit; 3. 18, transformation into the image of Christ; 4. 17, light affliction and eternal glory; 5. 14, the constraining love of Christ; 5. 17, a new creature in Christ; 6. 14, no communion between light and darkness; 6. 17, separation from the unclean thing; 7. 1, perfecting holiness; 7. 10, godly sorrow and worldly sorrow.

2. Chapters 8 and 9. Concerning the Collection. There were several reasons why Paul was interested especially in taking up this collection and in doing his utmost to make it a generous and worthy one: (1) The great need of the church in Jerusalem at this time. There was famine and distress among the brethren there, and everything seemed to indicate that matters would grow worse rather than better with them. Then there were other more personal reasons which influenced Paul in the matter. (2) There was his personal promise and pledge, made to James and Cephas and John when those pillars of the church gave the right-hands of fellowship to Paul and Barnabas and told them to go among the Gentiles but to remember their Jewish poor.[89] This Paul and Barnabas promised to do, and Paul was zealous to carry out his promise at this point.

(3) There was his hope that a generous contribution from the Gentile converts to their Jewish forbears in the faith would tend to reconcile the latter to the admission of the former to equal rights in the kingdom of God and the Church of the Christ. Surely, it would help to break down prejudice and to knit their hearts together in love. (4) There was his memory of his career as a persecutor of the Christians in Jerusalem. He had harried them out of their

[89] Gal. 2. 9, 10.

homes and had caused them untold distress and immeasurable injury. It was his duty now that he had become converted and was a Christian himself to do all he could to repair this great injury and to repay these brethren for the distress he had caused them in the days of his blindness and his persecuting zeal.

It must have taken all of these motives combined to make Paul undertake the collection of these funds. His sensitive nature must have shrunk from such a task; but when he had made up his mind he devoted himself to it with all of his characteristic energy. He inaugurated the work himself, and now he sends Titus and the other brother to see that it is successfully carried through. (*a*) He urges the example of the poor but generous Macedonians (8. 1-5). Since they have done so well, surely the Corinthians would be anxious to do better. (*b*) He appeals to their pride (8. 7). Since they abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, they ought to abound in this grace also. (*c*) He appeals to their love for him (8. 7). Let them prove their loyalty by cheerful giving at his command. (*d*) He urges the example of the Master, who was rich but gave up everything and became poor that through his poverty they might become rich (8. 9). (*e*) He tells them that he has given them a good reputation wherever he has gone and now it is incumbent upon them to live up to it (9. 2-6) (*f*) He promises them abundant and adequate reward for all their giving (9. 6-11). It is here that we read, "God loveth a hilarious giver (*ἱλαρὸν δότην*)." Too many givers are lugubrious instead of hilarious. Christian giving ought to be, not grudgingly nor of necessity, but with all cheerfulness and alacrity. It is here, too, that we find that glorious statement of the all-sufficiency of God's grace unto the all-completeness of God's work. "God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work: being enriched in everything unto all liberality,

which worketh through us thanksgiving to God" (9. 8, 11). (*g*) Finally Paul suggests to them that their liberality will bring glory to God in the closer union of the Jewish and Gentile hearts in Christian love (9. 12-14). (*h*) Then he closes with the exclamation, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!" (9. 15.) Surely, if they kept that in view, they would be willing to give anything and everything to Him.

Upon the basis of these eight considerations Paul hopes for a liberal contribution. These two chapters are unique in the New Testament. We find in them the fullest discussion of the reasons for and the rewards of Christian giving which the Scriptures have furnished us. They are worthy our careful study. They are full of suggestion as to the motives which should actuate Christians in their benevolences and as to the legitimate appeals which may be presented to them. We notice the rich variety of terms which Paul here uses: "grace, liberality, bounty, righteousness, ministration, contribution, gift." They all stand for the same thing. They all mean the collection. If anyone finds it an irksome task to raise money for any good and necessary cause, let him study the example of the great apostle here. Paul gave much of his time to the collection of money.

3. **Chapters 10-13. "The Great Invective."**[90] Robertson thus denominates this section. It is almost wholly a personal defense. There have been mutterings of a storm in all the epistle, but now the thunder begins to crash and the lightning to play, and the tempest bursts upon us in all its fury. Paul vindicates his apostleship by an appeal to (1) the sufferings he had undergone for the cause, (2) the visions and revelations he had had in the Lord, and (3) the signs and wonders and mighty works in the churches he had founded. The epistle closes with the apostolic bene-

[90] Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible, I, p. 496.

diction, the fullest form of blessing to be found in the New Testament, and the one generally adopted in the church to close its services. It is as though Paul would make up for the severity of certain portions of his letter by the amplitude of the closing benediction. He commends them to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the love of God, which has made this grace a possibility, and to the communion of the Holy Spirit, through which alone this love and grace may be appropriated and enjoyed (13. 14). George Herbert has said: "What an admirable epistle is the Second to the Corinthians! How full of affections! He joys and he is sorry, he grieves and he glories; never was there such care of a flock expressed, save in the great Shepherd of the fold, who first shed tears over Jerusalem, and afterward blood."

V. General Characteristics of the Epistle

1. In some particulars this is the most puzzling of the Pauline epistles. The constructions frequently are very difficult, and the sense is correspondingly obscure. The letter was written in haste, and at high tension of feeling. Words are omitted and so much is taken for granted which must have been familiar enough to Paul and to his first readers, but which we do not so readily understand. No epistle needs so much of a thorough knowledge of the background of previous personal experience to explain its allusions and its phrases. For the most part we are left to guess at these. Where it seems most simple the greatest obscurity may lurk. It is a jungle, and there are no clear paths through it. Deissmann says of it, "It is the most letterlike of all the letters of Paul, though that to Philemon may appear on the surface to have a better claim to that position. The great difficulty in the understanding of it is due to the very fact that it is so truly a letter, so full of allusions and familiar references, so pervaded with irony and with a depression which struggles against itself—

matters of which only the writer and the readers of it understood the purport, but which we, for the most part, can ascertain only approximately." [91]

2. It is the most intensely personal of the Pauline epistles. The individuality of the apostle is more apparent than in any other of his writings. Here only he tells us about those two important experiences in his own life, the spiritual ecstasy in which he was rapt into the third heaven, and the spiritual and mental and physical agony in which he learned humility and dependence upon Christ, an experience of paradise and an experience of purgatory. We study this letter and we can see the apostle's eye flash with indignation and then fill with tears. We can see his face flush with righteous anger and then pale with longing and anxiety. We can see his countenance cloud with vehement and passionate denial of his slanderers and then light up again with love and hope. We can see his head lift itself with all dignity and independence and then bow again in deepest humility. He can boast and he can be abased. He can be tactful and tender. He can be uncompromising with any antagonist of the truth. He is full of fervor and full of faith. He is ready for any personal sacrifice, only the cause he represents must not be sacrificed. He is one with his mission. Any attack upon him may injure its success. He defends himself that his mission may be secure.

The epistle, therefore, while it brings before us the most vivid picture we have of the character of the apostle, gives us deep insight into his conception of the fundamental principles, the motives and aspirations, the consolations and the consummation of the gospel he had to preach. Findlay has written: "To see Paul at his greatest as a thinker and a theologian, we turn to the Epistle to the Romans; to know him as a saint, we read the Philippian epistle. But if we would measure him as a man amongst men, and as a min-

[91] Bible Studies, p. 47.

ister of Christ; if we would sound the depths of his heart and realize the force and fire of his nature, the ascendency of his genius, and the charm of his manner and disposition, we must thoroughly understand the second letter to the Corinthians." [92]

3. This is the most emotional of the Pauline epistles. Various emotions are striving for the mastery throughout. Now indignation seems uppermost and now sorrow and now holy exultation. Sometimes the apostle's humility is to the front and sometimes his wounded dignity. Now he is dominated by an energy of assault and now he is shrinking from the cruel darts of his foes. J. Llewelyn Davies has said of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians: "The letter exhibits a tumult of contending emotions. Wounded affection, joy, self-respect, hatred of self-assertion, consciousness of the authority and the importance of his ministry, scorn of his opponents, toss themselves like waves, sometimes against each other, on the troubled sea of his mind. . . . Strong language, not seldom stronger than the occasion seems to warrant, figurative expressions, abrupt turns, phrases seized and flung at his assailants, words made up, iterated, played upon, mark this epistle far more than any other of the apostle's letters. . . . Even the calmer parts of the letter are influenced as to their style by the emotion which breaks out in the more vehement." [93]

The hidden depths of the soul of Paul are revealed in this alternating progress of his thought. Godet compares it to a Grand Cañon and says, "As a geologist who wishes to study the deepest strata of the globe's crust will not go to a flat country but will betake himself to a region abounding in deep ravines where the torrents incessantly excavate and reexcavate the soil of the valley, so he who would know in all its depths the soul of Paul will have to open the Second Epistle to the Corinthians." There is one thing

[92] *Op. cit.*, p. 110.

[93] Expositor, IV, iv, pp. 299, 300.

to be noticed in all this epistle and that is that the apostle never loses his self-control. He is swept along by a storm of emotion, but he always is master of the storm. In his Epistle to the Ephesians we read his exhortation, "Be ye angry, and sin not," [94] and we could have no better example of the fulfillment of that command than we find in this epistle.

Weizsäcker has estimated the apostle rightly at this point, when he says: "Joy and heaviness, anxiety and hope, trust and resentment, anger and love follow one another, the one as intense as the other. Yet there is no touch of changeableness, nor any contradiction. The circumstances dictate and justify it all, and he is master of it all, the same throughout, and always his whole self. An extraordinary susceptibility of feeling and impression, such as only an extraordinary character can hold in control," [95] is set forth here. That is the wonder of it all, that a man of such delicate sensibility can be so firm and so self-controlled. The life and language of this man are controlled by Christ. It is unto Christ that he presents his labor and his sorrow and his love. He was always ready to say,

"Yet it was well, and Thou hast said in season,
'As is the master shall the servant be':
Let me not subtly slide into the treason,
Seeking an honor which they gave not Thee;

"Never at even, pillowed on a pleasure,
Sleep with the wings of aspiration furled,
Hide the last mite of the forbidden treasure,
Keep for my joy a world within the world;

"Nay, but much rather let me, late returning,
Bruised of my brethren, wounded from within,
Stoop with sad countenance and blushes burning,
Bitter with weariness and sick with sin—

[94] Eph. 4. 26.
[95] Apost. Ztlter, p. 328.

"Then as I weary me and long and languish,
Nowise availing from that pain to part—
Desperate tides of the whole great world's anguish
Forced through the channels of a single heart—

"Straight to thy presence get me and reveal it,
Nothing ashamed of tears upon thy feet,
Show the sore wound and beg thine hand to heal it,
Pour thee the bitter, pray thee for the sweet."[96]

VI. The Style of the Epistle

We have in this epistle the Pauline style with all of its characteristics intensified. The sentences frequently are broken and involved and obscure. There is a greater variety of style, and it has a larger number of peculiar features. Godet says, "The language is all full of emotion, of outpourings of grief, anguish, and love, outbursts of indignation, quivering sarcasms, dashes like torrents of lava. Such is the style of Second Corinthians." Marvin R. Vincent says of the epistle, "Ecstatic thanksgiving and cutting irony, self-assertion and self-abnegation, commendation, warning, and authority, paradox and apology all meet and cross and seethe, and yet out of the swirling eddies rise like rocks grand Christian principles and inspiring hopes." Erasmus compared the flow of the thought in this epistle to "a river which sometimes flows in a gentle stream, sometimes rushes down as a torrent bearing all before it, sometimes spreads out like a placid lake, sometimes loses itself, as it were, in the sand, and breaks out in its fullness at some unexpected place."

VII. Some Noteworthy Features of the Epistle

1. In 11. 23-33 we have what has been called "the most marvelous fragment ever written in any biography." We

[96] Myers, Saint Paul, pp. 3, 4.

learn from it that in the book of Acts we have only a tithe of the sufferings and the experiences of the apostle Paul. Of many of the things mentioned here we have no record anywhere else.

2. The metaphors are noteworthy: (1) Treasure in earthen vessels (4. 7), with a possible reference to Gideon's lamps. (2) Tabernacling here, but housed eternally (5. 1). (3) Affliction is a light weight and glory will be an eternal one (4. 17). (4) In 2. 17 Paul says that he does not peddle the word of God, does not make merchandise of it. (5) In 11. 8 he says he did not paralyze the Corinthians with any demands of money from them for his own use. Others of Paul's metaphors here are pretty badly mixed, as is natural in an epistle written in haste and great emotion. (6) In 5. 2 Paul speaks of our longing to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, in order that we may not be found naked. It is an unusual figure of speech at least. People do not commonly speak of their houses as clothing or of their clothing as a house. (7) In 3. 2 the Corinthians are Paul's epistle, written in his heart, and in 3. 3 they are Christ's epistle written in their own hearts. (8) In 2. 14 the knowledge of Christ is a sweet savor, and in 2. 15 the apostles and preachers of the Christ are a sweet savor.

3. Certain words are frequently repeated and become keynotes of certain sections or of the entire epistle: (1) "Affliction" is the dominant word in the first section of the epistle (1. 4, 6, 8; 2. 4; 4. 8, 17; 6. 4; 7. 4; 8. 13). (2) "Comfort" and "comforting" are found twenty-eight times in the epistle (1. 3, 4; 7. 4-7, etc.) Chronologically, this is the first appearance of this word in the New Testament. It has the double meaning of "counsel" and "consolation." The Paraclete is our Comforter, and he is also our Advocate, called to our side to counsel and aid. "Tribulation" and "consolation" are introduced together at the very beginning of the epistle. The apostle is sad at heart as he

begins his dictation, but nevertheless he begins with rejoicing. Even as he pictures his distress and his tribulation he gives reason after reason for his abiding joy: (*a*) God comforts him (1. 4). (*b*) He has a good conscience (1. 12). (*c*) There are open doors for the gospel (2. 12). (*d*) He has continuous spiritual triumph (2. 14). (3) "Boast" and "boasting" become prominent words in the closing chapters. They occur twenty-nine times in the epistle, and only twenty-six times in all the rest of Paul's writings. Three times Paul makes the formal announcement, "Now I am going to boast." (4) Paul rings the changes upon the word "weakness" in this epistle (11. 30; 12. 5-9; 13. 4, etc.).

VIII. Occasion and Place of Writing

First Corinthians was written in the spring of the year A. D. 57, at Ephesus. Later the riot took place there which is described in Acts 19. Immediately after this Paul left Ephesus and went to Troas, and a door was opened unto the gospel of Christ in that place,[97] but Paul was restless there and pushing on into Macedonia he waited in some city in that province for the coming of Titus with the latest news from the situation in Corinth. When he met Titus he learned from him (1) that the effect of a former letter to the Corinthians was satisfactory, and that some of the church members were filled with grief and remorse for their conduct, and that the most grievous offender was either repentant or reprobate; and (2) that there was a portion of the church which was developing a radical opposition to Paul's person and teaching. The apostle at once wrote this second epistle, "an outpouring of personal feeling from beginning to end, full of mingled tenderness and indignation." The epistle was written from Philippi or Thessalonica or some other city in Macedonia in A. D. 57, late in the year.

[97] 2 Cor. 2. 12.

IX. Evidence for the Epistle

The external evidence in the postapostolic age is very slight. This epistle contrasts with First Corinthians again at this point. Irenæus is the first to mention the epistle by name. However, it has been accepted almost universally as Pauline. The peculiarly personal character of so much of its contents would not lend itself to frequent quotation, and the internal evidence for the Pauline authorship is exceptionally strong. Robertson says, "In its individuality of style, intensity of feeling, inimitable expression of the writer's idiosyncrasy, it may be said to stand at the head of all the Pauline epistles, Galatians not excepted." [98] The Muratorian Canon, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian bear unexceptionable witness to the authenticity of the epistle. Its genuineness never has been seriously questioned. We cannot say as much about its integrity.

X. Integrity of the Epistle

Semler first suggested that in Second Corinthians we had portions of two or more epistles, which in some fashion unknown to us had been joined together by some copyist and so had come down to our times as a single epistle. Not much attention was paid to this opinion until Hausrath, of Heidelberg, in 1870 published a pamphlet on The Four Chapter Epistle of Paul, in which he argued that 2 Cor. 10-13 was a portion of a distinct epistle which was of earlier date than 2 Cor. 1-9. With some differences of opinion as to details the following authorities are disposed to agree that we have two epistles in our Second Corinthians; Paulus, Weisse, Lipsius, von Soden, Schmiedel, Völter, Pfleiderer, Brückner, Clemen, König, Krenkel, Cramer, Cone, McGiffert, Mackintosh, Rendall, Bacon, Plummer, Scott, Peake, Adeney, Kennedy, and Moffatt. On the other hand, Holtzmann, Hilgenfeld, Beyschlag,

[98] Hastings's Bible Dictionary, I, p. 491.

Klöpper, Weizsäcker, Sabatier, Godet, Weiss, Zahn, Robertson, White, Sanday, and Shaw decide in favor of the integrity of the epistle. It is generally conceded that the opponents of the integrity can make a very good case, and that there is a possibility that they may be correct in their views.

Some of the reasons they give for their conclusion are as follows: 1. In 2 Cor. 2. 4 we read, "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears." To what epistle does Paul refer when he says, "I wrote to you in much anguish and tears"? Can it be First Corinthians, which is such an orderly and comparatively calm discussion of a succession of themes? Would it not apply much better to the writing of the four chapters which we call 2 Cor. 10-13? Surely, in all the writings of Paul we have no other passage where the affliction and the anguish are so apparent in the composition and we are so sure of the flowing tears.

2. In 2 Cor. 7. 8, 9, we read, "Though I made you sorry with my epistle, I do not regret it: though I did regret it (for I see that that epistle made you sorry, though but for a season), I now rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry unto repentance." These words may be applied to First Corinthians, but they still more naturally apply to the greater severity of 2 Cor. 10-13.

3. In these four closing chapters Paul uses the verb, "to boast" seventeen times. The two words, "boast" and "boasting," become characteristic. Now, in 2 Cor. 3. 1 we read, "Are we beginning again to commend ourselves?" and in 2 Cor. 5. 12, "We are not again commending ourselves unto you." If we look for the occasion when Paul had commended himself formerly, we may be puzzled to find it, unless we decide to put 2. Cor. 10-13 at an earlier date, and then these passages become perfectly clear.

4. In 2 Cor. 2. 1 we read, "I determined this for myself, that I would not come again to you with sorrow," and in 1. 23, "To spare you I forbare to come unto Corinth."

We scarcely are able to believe that Paul ever was sorry that he had written First Corinthians, or that he would hesitate to visit Corinth after having written it; but we easily can believe that he had some misgivings about the writing and the reception of 2 Cor. 10-13, and he says explicitly in these chapters, "If I come again, I will not spare" (13. 2). If he had gone to Corinth after the writing of these chapters, he would have gone in sorrow, and after having made such a threat the only way he could spare them was by staying away.

5. In 2 Cor. 8 we find that Titus has just been sent to Corinth on his mission, and Paul commends him to their loving reception in 8. 24. In 12. 18 reference is made to a past mission of Titus, in which he had taken advantage of no one of them.

6. In 2 Cor. 10. 6 Paul says that he is in readiness to avenge all disobedience, when their obedience is made full. Evidently, when Paul wrote these words he was not certain that all in the Corinthian church were obedient. In 2 Cor. 2. 9 we read, "For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye are obedient in all things," and in 7. 15 Paul recalls the return of Titus and his report, and he says, "He remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him." In 10. 6 Paul was in readiness to avenge their disobedience; and in 7. 15 he is commending the obedience of them all. How can we reconcile these statements? There is no difficulty if we separate these chapters, and make the four closing chapters of earlier date. If we recognize in these chapters a separate epistle, in all probability it would be written from Ephesus at some time before the Ephesian riot and Paul's departure from that city.

7. Hausrath and Kennedy point out that if 2 Cor. 10. 16 was written in Macedonia we scarcely can interpret Paul's statement literally, when he expresses the hope that he may preach the gospel even unto the parts beyond them, since

in a line from Macedonia the parts beyond Corinth would be in the continent of Africa, and we have no reason to think that Paul ever planned any mission work in those regions; while, on the other hand, if he were in Ephesus when these words were written, the parts beyond Corinth in a line from Ephesus would be Rome and Spain, which we know from Rom. 15. 23, 24 Paul did intend to visit.

These considerations may fall short of being conclusive, but they surely are sufficient to make a plausible case. Those who are ready to divide our Second Corinthians at the close of the ninth chapter must conclude that Paul wrote at least four epistles to the Corinthians; a first epistle, which has been lost, and which is mentioned in our 1 Cor. 5. 9, "I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators;" and then a second epistle, which we call First Corinthians; and then a third epistle, the beginning of which has been lost and which we now locate in 2 Cor. 10-13; and fourth and last, the epistle which is contained in our 2 Cor. 1-9.

XI. Effect of the Epistle or Epistles

The final outcome seems to have been a happy one for the apostle Paul. His enemies were either discountenanced or silenced. The church as a whole continued to have him in high honor. He visited Corinth again later, and spent the winter there; and while there he wrote the Epistle to the Romans, which is comparatively free from all agitation and is a calm exposition of the fundamentals of Paul's theology. We learn from the book of Acts that the collection was made successfully.[99]

XII. Later History of the Church

In A. D. 95 Clement of Rome wrote an epistle to the Corinthians, from which we gather that the church then

[99] Acts 20. 4.

was split into factions and otherwise was suffering from many of the ills against which Paul had fulminated in his epistles. Hegesippus visited the church in Corinth in A. D. 135. Bishop Soter, of Rome, in the second century wrote another epistle to the Corinthians in which he mentions the fact that Paul's letters were read with devotion in the church of that time. In the middle of the third century the city of Corinth was ravaged by the Goths, and the church came to an end at this date.

What a strange composite this church at Corinth always must have been! There were slaves in its membership, and there were people who were of aristocratic circles, synagogue and city officials. There were some who were rich and there were more who were poor. There were Gentiles and Jews, and the distinction between the two was just as noticeable and radical then as it is now. There were some who were devoted adherents of the apostle Paul and there were others who were his bitter enemies. There were saintly women and there were shrewish women, modest women and women clamorous for their rights. There were some who were factious and a few who were licentious. Take it all in all, it was a strange composite. It is one of the marvels of history that one little man could dominate this strange assembly and make it into a Christian church and give to it his own Christian theology. The church at Corinth, with all its faults and all its glories, will live forever as pictured in these two Pauline epistles.

CHAPTER VII

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

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I. Where Was Galatia?

Galatia proper lay north of Phrygia and Cappadocia. It was about two hundred miles long from east to west and about a hundred miles in breadth from north to south. It was occupied in the first Christian century by three Gallic tribes, the Trocmi, the Tolistoboii, and the Tectosages. Their capital cities were Tavium at the northeast, Pessinus at the southwest, and Ancyra about midway between the two. The Roman province of Galatia included Galatia proper, a part of Phrygia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia; and these latter included the cities of Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. The official Galatia, therefore, was much larger than Galatia proper. In the book of Acts the larger Roman province is never called Galatia. That name is reserved for Galatia proper. The writer of the book of Acts uses the name in the older and the popular sense rather than in the newer and Roman one. Does Paul do the same thing? When he writes to the Galatians and to the churches of Galatia, does he write to the people and to the churches of Galatia proper or to the people and the churches of the larger Roman province of Galatia?

There is nothing in the epistle itself which will decide the question definitely. Therefore there is room for a difference of opinion, and the authorities have radically divided upon this issue. It was believed very generally, up to the middle of the last century, that the Epistle to the Galatians was written to the churches of Galatia proper. Within the last century, however, a number of authorities

have been convinced that the epistle was written to the churches of Lycaonia and Pisidia. Probably they are still in the minority, but their thesis is growing in favor, and it has some most energetic and able representatives. Among those who believe that the Epistle to the Galatians was written to the churches at Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, all of them founded on the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas, we may name Perrot, Weizsäcker, Hausrath, Weber, Thiersch, Paulus, Böttger, Mynster, Niemeyer, Schenkel, Steck, Zahn, Pfleiderer, O. Holtzmann, von Soden, Renan, Sabatier, Ramsay, Rendall, Sanday, Peake, Askwith, Gifford, McGiffert, Rackham, Bacon, Bartlet, Forbes, Adeney, and Shaw.

The reasons urged for this conclusion are as follows:

1. We have a full account of the founding of these churches in the book of Acts. On the North-Galatian theory we have no information concerning the founding of the Galatian churches except such fragmentary hints as may be gathered from the epistle itself. Would it be at all probable that the writer of Acts would have omitted all reference to the founding of churches as important as these churches seem to be? The epistle has to do with the most important controversy in the early church, that of the relation of the converted Gentiles to the ritual observances of the Jews. That question had to be settled once for all; and this epistle seems to have settled it. Would it not be most natural that this question should arise and clamor for settlement in the first churches founded by Paul in Gentile territory on the first missionary journey? Is this not more probable than that such an important issue should be fought out in territory of which we know nothing from our New Testament records and among churches all trace of which seems to have been lost, not only before but even after the writing of this epistle? It is a choice between believing that the epistle was written to churches which we know about and in which we know that the apostle Paul was deeply

interested or believing that it was written to churches whose very existence is conjectural.

2. The author of the book of Acts uses popular terms rather than official ones. Paul, however, always uses the official Roman terms when he speaks of the Roman provinces. He mentions Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia in his writings, and always prefers the proper Roman official term to the popular designations to be found in Acts. Now for seventy-five years the Roman Galatia had included the cities of Lycaonia and Pisidia; and Paul simply would be following his invariable custom when he called the churches of these cities Galatian. He would not be likely to make an exception to his usual custom in any case, and he surely would not be likely to rank the obscure territory of Galatia proper with the great Roman provinces of Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia.

3. Galatia proper is a very wild country. Its inhabitants were rude and uncultured. They were boorish country people. Their territory was off all the great highways of commerce and was filled with almost impassable mountain ranges. Now Paul worked always in the Greek-speaking cities. He did not like the country at any time, and it is extremely improbable that he would undertake a journey into this monotonous and unpromising region with its rustic inhabitants using their Celtic dialects. Paul traveled by the great Roman roads and preferred to spend his time in the great centers of population.

4. The epistle refers to Barnabas again and again,[1] as if he were well known to the readers of it. Now, Barnabas accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey through Antioch, Lystra, Iconium, and Derbe and was well known to the people in the churches there. Silas was the companion of Paul in the second missionary journey in which the Galatian churches were founded if they were founded in

[1] Gal. 2. 1, 9, 13.

North Galatia; and he is not mentioned in the epistle at all. This would seem to indicate that the epistle was written to the churches of South Galatia.

5. The epistle indicates that its recipients were in communication with Antioch and Jerusalem. The Judaizers would be more likely to reach the cities of South Galatia than the remoter regions of North Galatia.

6. Paul gives as the occasion of the founding of these churches some illness of his own. Ramsay thinks that it was a malarial fever which drove Paul from the unhealthy seacoast into the mountainous interior. This would seem more probable than that any illness could have sent him from populous centers into the barren plains and remoter districts of North Galatia. If Paul simply was detained there by his sickness as he was passing through, where could he have been going beyond these wilds?

7. In Acts 18. 23 we read that Paul at the beginning of the third missionary journey went through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, in order, establishing all the disciples. If Galatia here means North Galatia alone, then all the disciples were not visited, and some important fields which Paul had evangelized were passed by.

8. In Acts 20. 4 we find the list of the deputies accompanying Paul when he sets out for Jerusalem with the collection taken up in all the Gentile churches for the poor saints among the Jews. We know how much Paul was interested in this collection and how he was anxious that all the Gentiles should be represented in it. Looking through the list, we find nobody from the churches of North Galatia, granting that there were any such; but Timothy is mentioned and Gaius of Derbe, both of whom come from the churches of South Galatia. These two men represented the Roman province of Galatia; and there is no representative from among the Celts.

9. On the supposition that the Galatian churches were in Galatia proper Paul never makes any reference to them in

any of his further writing. They not only are not mentioned in the book of Acts, but they fall completely out of notice in all the later Pauline and New Testament epistles. If Paul's favorite disciple, Timothy, was a Galatian, this is not true.

10. The charge of inconsistency on the part of Paul in the matter of circumcision most probably was founded upon his conduct in the case of Timothy.

11. In Gal. 4. 14 we read, "Ye received me as an angel of God." We turn to Acts 14. 11 and we find the Lycaonians saying, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." May not the one passage be a reference to the other? There is a possibility that these considerations are sufficient to settle the question in many minds.

However, the older and traditional view still is held by the majority of scholars, among whom we find Mommsen, Wieseler, Weiss, Wendt, Zöckler, Dobschütz, Lipsius, Rückert, Schürer, Schmiedel, Steinmann, Sieffert, Lietzmann, H. J. Holtzmann, Hofmann, Hilgenfeld, Holsten, Haupt, Blass, Jülicher, Bousset, Godet, Howson, Jowett, Lightfoot, Davidson, Chase, Farrar, Findlay, Salmon, Moffatt, and Gilbert. These men say:

1. It is nothing against the fact that the Galatian churches were founded in Galatia proper that the book of Acts says nothing about it. We know that the book of Acts says nothing about many other experiences of Paul. It says nothing about Paul's journey into Arabia before he began his missionary preaching, but Paul vouches for it in this very epistle.[2] It says nothing about the mission work in Syria and Cilicia of which also Paul tells us in this epistle.[3] It says nothing of the work in Dalmatia and Illyria.[4] It is absolutely silent about all the troubles in the Corinthian church which led Paul to write our two epistles to the Cor-

[2] Gal. 1. 17.

[3] Gal. 1. 21.

[4] Rom. 15. 19; 2 Tim. 4. 10.

inthians. It gives us no word concerning the founding of the church at Colossæ to which Paul wrote an epistle later. When the book of Acts is silent about so many things in Paul's life its silence here argues nothing.

2. It is of no weight against this theory that no representatives from North Galatia are mentioned among the delegates gathered about Paul at Troas when he was on his way to Jerusalem with the moneys collected for the poor saints there. The list there given does not represent all of the Pauline churches. No one is mentioned from Corinth or Philippi or Achaia. At any rate, the Galatian contribution may have been sent directly to Jerusalem. What would be the use of sending it first to Macedonia or Troas, and of running all the risks involved in its transportation by that roundabout route?

3. It is not quite true that Paul confined himself to work in the great cities. How about Derbe and Lystra? These were small and unimportant places and yet Paul visited and evangelized them. He may have made the cities his headquarters, but he always had the region round about in his eye. He sent out his assistants and his converts into the whole province about the capital city, and he kept himself informed as to their work. He doubtless inspected it whenever it was possible. He always was pressing on into the regions beyond. He had the restless temperament of the pioneer and the explorer. The North Galatian territory would have attracted him, even as the Bithynian territory did later.[5] He may have essayed to go into the northern regions from South Galatia and the Spirit of Jesus had not hindered him.

4. It is acknowledged that the author of the book of Acts uses the popular rather than the official phraseology in speaking of Galatia. If he were a companion of the apostle Paul, as seems most probable, it is likely that his custom

[5] Acts 16. 7.

and Paul's custom would be the same in this matter. Anyway, the burden of proof is upon those who declare that Paul's custom is different. It is open to us to believe that it is not. It is clear that in Acts 16. 5, 6 Galatia is distinguished from the southern provinces; and, if we had nothing but the book of Acts to go upon, the suggestion of the South Galatian theory would have been impossible.

5. In Gal. 4. 12-15 Paul says that the churches in Galatia were founded because he was detained among them by sickness. Now, we know that this was not the case with the founding of the churches in South Galatia. The book of Acts gives us to understand that the mission of Paul and Barnabas to these cities was the direct result of their being sent from the church at Antioch to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. The churches in Antioch of Pisidia, and Lystra and Iconium and Derbe were founded in direct and purposed missionary labor and not in consequence of any illness at all.

6. In the Epistle to the Galatians Paul appears as the sole founder of the churches addressed; and if he were writing to the churches founded in the first missionary journey he surely would have joined the name of Barnabas with his own, for Barnabas was responsible just as much as Paul for the missionary work done in those South Galatian cities. Findlay suggests with much force that Paul "speaks elsewhere of those who 'stretch themselves overmuch' and 'build on another's foundation' with a contempt, some measure of which would fall on himself, if he really ignored Barnabas's paternal rights and interest in the churches of the first missionary tour, and elbowed him out of the partnership as he must have done on the South-Galatian hypothesis. . . . It was a joint enterprise upon which they were engaged. Barnabas was at that time Paul's colleague upon an equal footing, if not, in public estimate, his official superior, as he was his senior in age and, in a sense, his patron. In view of Paul's known character and delicate

sentiments toward his fellow workers, I cannot understand his assumption of sole jurisdiction over the Galatians and his oblivion of Barnabas's part in their conversion, if they were the Galatians of the southern cities where Barnabas and he labored as fellow missionaries. Their subsequent disagreement would have made the apostle all the more scrupulous to do full justice to his old comrade in arms." [6] That Barnabas is mentioned does not argue that the Galatians were personally acquainted with him. Paul mentions him in writing to the Corinthians and to the Colossians, and we have no reason to think that the people in Corinth or in Colossæ knew Barnabas except by hearsay, and we know that Barnabas had no part in the founding of those churches. They had heard of Barnabas as of all the other most prominent leaders in the Christian Church. They would understand the reference to him, though they never had seen him.

7. In Gal. 4. 14 Paul says that the Galatians received him "as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus." Is there anything in the narrative of the founding of the churches in the cities of South Galatia which would correspond to this statement? Surely not, when Paul was cast out of Antioch, and shamefully treated in Iconium, and stoned and left for dead at Lystra. Did the heathen inhabitants of Lystra take him for an incarnation of Hermes and offer him idolatrous worship? That very fact proved that they had no conception at that time of the nature of his message and that they knew nothing of the Christian salvation; and therefore their action surely was far removed from receiving him as Christ Jesus. No, the hospitality of these simple country people and their devotion to the apostle has no counterpart in the experiences narrated in Acts 13-14.

8. In the Epistle to the Galatians Paul reports the decisions of the council at Jerusalem, as if his readers would

[6] Expository Times, vii, pp. 235, 236.

thus hear them for the first time. This would not be true if they were in the cities of South Galatia, for Paul had visited them after the Jerusalem council and had handed them the letter sent out to the Gentiles by that council. Therefore the Galatians of this epistle must have belonged to a different circle of converts.

9. The Galatians to whom Paul writes are being urged into circumcision by certain Judaizers, and they seem to have been influenced by their persuasions and arguments. This would not have been so likely to occur in South Galatia where they knew about the Jerusalem council and could have presented to these proselytizers the official decision of the matter there made.

10. In Gal. 1. 12 Paul tells about coming into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. Now, Paul visited the cities of South Galatia at the same time that he labored in these other districts. Surely, then, in writing to these people he would not have omitted all mention of his work among themselves. If he labored in Syria, Cilicia, *and* Galatia, he surely would have mentioned Galatia when writing to the Galatians.

There is one consolation in the uncertainty as to the destination of this epistle, and that is that its interpretation is not seriously affected by our decision of this question. In minor details the exegesis may be influenced by one's opinion in this matter, but in broad outline the truths of the epistle are independent of any local habitation.

II. Who Were the Galatians?

Our answer to this question, of course, will depend upon our answer to the former question as to the location of Galatia. If the Galatians were the inhabitants of Galatia proper, then predominantly they were Gauls with a substratum of the ancient Phrygian population and an intermingling of Greeks and Romans and Jews. Altogether, we are told that they were a "mongrel crew," a mixed race.

The Gauls themselves were an alien people from the far west. They came from beyond the Rhine and the outlying islands west of Europe. The colonists at Marseilles called them Celtæ, the Greeks called them Galatæ, and the Romans called them Galli. They had the same Gallic or Celtic blood with the Irish, the Welsh, and the French of to-day.

They seem to have been a restless race through all their history and they began their migrations toward the East in the fourth century before Christ. They crossed the Alps into Italy and sacked the city of Rome in B. C. 390. A century later they crossed the Danube and invaded Macedonia and Greece, attacking the oracle at Delphi in B. C. 279. Pressing onward through Thrace, they entered Asia Minor, and about B. C. 230 they finally settled in the mountainous districts south of the Black Sea and gave their name to the land they had conquered, Galatia, the home of the Gauls. In this district they maintained themselves until they were conquered by the Romans in B. C. 189. A succession of their own princes was permitted to govern them until, about B. C. 25, they were made a part of the larger Roman province of Galatia.

Lightfoot and others have pointed out the fact that the Galatians of this epistle have the Celtic characteristics: enthusiasm (4. 14), fickleness (1. 6), superstition (3. 1; 5. 20), drunkenness (5. 21), vanity (5. 26), and fondness for strife (5. 15). They are a passionate, quarrelsome, impulsive, mercurial people. Michelet describes the modern French as "sensual, prompt to learn, prompt to despise, and greedy of new things." This characterization applies perfectly to the Galatians of this epistle. It is interesting to find these peoples from Western Europe settled here in Asia Minor, and there is a temptation to believe that the apostle Paul came into contact with them and that the great battle for religious liberty was fought out in their behalf. Martin Luther comes next to the apostle Paul in his work for religious emancipation, and he fought his battle

against the Roman hierarchy upon the basis furnished him by the Epistle to the Galatians, and he thought that the characteristics of the Galatians were the characteristics of the Germans of his day.

Those who believe that the Galatians addressed were the Christians in Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe insist that too much has been made of these Celtic characteristics and that they might be ascribed just as readily to the Phrygians as to the Gauls and that indeed they are so common in any community of people that they are human rather than racial qualities. Changeableness, quarrelsomeness, vanity, drunkenness, and superstition would be likely to appear in South Galatia as well as in Galatia proper. We may grant this contention, and leave this question equally unsettled with the former one, remembering again that the understanding of the epistle does not depend upon our conclusion concerning these things.

III. Date and Place of Writing

There are many different opinions upon these points. Some think that the Epistle to the Galatians is the earliest of the Pauline epistles and some think that it is the latest, and it has been put at almost every possible place between these two extreme dates. Some say that the epistle was written in Ephesus.[7] One reason for this opinion is found in the statement in Gal. 1. 6, "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel." This is interpreted to mean, "I marvel that you have become apostate in so short a time;" and then the conclusion is easy that Paul had just left the Galatians and he is astonished to learn by the first messengers who follow him to Ephesus that they have turned about face immediately after his departure. We consider this a misinterpretation. Paul does not mean, "I am sur-

[7] Credner, Hofmann, H. J. Holtzmann, Lipsius, Meyer, Reuss, Sieffert, Schmiedel, Steinmann, Wieseler, Godet, Alford, Moffatt.

prised that you have backslidden so soon after your conversion," for the Galatians had been evangelized, as we think, some five or seven years before this; but he expresses surprise that they have been led astray so suddenly, and that with so little persuasion they have been induced to follow the Judaizing teachers. It is the suddenness of this change of faith which seems so marvelous to him. It is not, now converted and now backsliders with them, but now Pauline in doctrine and now perverted. The facility with which this change has been made is inexplicable to Paul.

The subscription to this epistle in the Authorized Version says, "Written to the Galatians from Rome." This decision as to the place of writing is due to another misunderstanding of the text in Gal. 4. 20 and 6. 17, where it has been supposed that Paul was making reference to his own imprisonment. There is, of course, no such reference in the language here used, and this subscription in the Authorized Version is a gross mistake. We think that First Corinthians was written in the spring of A. D. 57, and Second Corinthians in the fall of the same year, and Romans early in the year 58, and Galatians between Second Corinthians and Romans in the winter of A. D. 57-58. If this date is the correct one, the place of writing is thus determined to be some city of Macedonia, possibly the same city in which Second Corinthians was written, or still more probably Corinth, the city in which the Epistle to the Romans was written.[8]

Our reasons for these conclusions are as follows:

1. The Epistle to the Galatians belongs to the second group of the Pauline epistles. Its style and its general character plainly put it into the period to which they belong. The Pauline epistles, as we have seen, fall into four groups, written approximately with intervals of five years between them; and the Epistle to the Galatians is not like those of

[8] Bleek, Dobschütz, Conybeare and Howson, Lightfoot, Salmon.

the first, the third, or the fourth groups, but it is like those of the second group. These epistles have certain common characteristics which have been listed as (1) a tension of feeling, (2) a profusion of quotations from the Old Testament, (3) a frequent use of the interrogation, (4) an abruptness of expression, and (5) certain doctrinal distinctions from the other groups. The subjects with which they are chiefly concerned are (*a*) justification by faith, (*b*) the distinction between the law and grace, and (*c*) the liberty of the gospel. In all these particulars the Epistle to the Galatians would seem to be the typical epistle of this second group.

2. It is like Second Corinthians in several particulars: (1) The two epistles have the same tone. In both we find the same sensitiveness and earnestness of the apostle manifest throughout. He makes the same frequent reference to his infirmity; and, indeed, about all that we know of Paul's thorn in the flesh we gather from these two epistles. We find the same readiness to make concessions to the older apostles, and the same protest against their exclusive right to the apostolate. We find the same denunciation of false teachers in both the epistles, and the same strong assertion of his own apostleship, together with strong expression of his humility. (2) We find some sentences practically the same in both epistles. Compare Gal. 3. 13 with 2 Cor. 5. 21, and Gal. 6. 7 with 2 Cor. 9. 6. (3) We have the same phrases in both, such as "another gospel," "a new creature," and "we persuade men." Compare Gal. 1. 6 with 2 Cor. 11. 4, and Gal. 6. 15 with 2 Cor. 5. 17.

3. It is most like the Epistle to the Romans: (1) It has the same thesis or text," "By the works of the law no flesh is justified" (Gal. 2. 16 and Rom. 3. 20). (2) It has the same arguments: (*a*) We find the same Old Testament passage quoted in both and the same conclusions drawn from it (Gal. 3. 6 and Rom. 4. 3). (*b*) Both argue that the Mosaic law was divinely sanctioned and yet it is not binding

upon Christians (Gal. 3. 19 and Rom. 6). (3) There are strange verbal agreements in the two epistles, which would indicate that there could have been no long interval between the times of their composition. Note again Gal. 2. 16 and Rom. 3. 20. Both these passages quote from Psa. 143. 2, and they both change the quotation from the original in the same way, adding "the works of the law" and altering "no living man" into "no flesh." Compare the passages Gal. 5. 17 and Rom. 7. 15-23, and see how the conception in Galatians simply is expanded and illustrated in the later epistle. (4) There are many parallel passages in the two epistles. Compare Gal. 4. 5-7 with Rom. 8. 14-17, and Gal. 2. 20 with Rom. 6. 6-8, and Gal. 5. 14 with Rom. 13. 9, and Gal. 2. 7 with Rom. 15. 15 and 11. 13. At least twenty of these parallels have been noted by the commentators. We conclude, therefore, with Lightfoot, that Galatians is "the rough model of which Romans is the finished statue." [9]

IV. The Occasion of the Epistle

The writing of this epistle was occasioned through an invasion of the Galatian territory by certain Judaizing emissaries who attacked Paul's character and Paul's gospel and who endeavored to make his Gentile converts to Christianity become thoroughgoing Jews. They said about the same things which had been said at Corinth, and it may be that there was a concerted effort among the Judaizers in the Christian Church at this time to undermine the influence of the apostle Paul and to restore the Jewish supremacy in the church which had characterized the early days and years of its history, but which was now threatened with overthrow by the ever-increasing numbers of the Pauline converts in the Gentile fields. Their appearance and their aggressive campaign seem to have been at about the same period in Corinth and in Galatia. They may have represented a simultaneous effort throughout the Pauline fields

[9] Lightfoot, Galatians, p. 49

which seriously menaced the continuance of his most cherished principles and the maintenance of his most promising church communities.

It must have been one of the darkest hours in Paul's life. An illness had befallen him which seemed more than he could bear, and under its weight he had gone down to the very edge of the grave. No wonder that he talks as much as he does about his physical weakness at this time. He was just convalescing from such a serious attack that he had despaired of his life, and his recovery had seemed like a reprieve granted to one under sentence of death, or like the resurrection of one who already had died.[10] Probably just before this illness Paul had been compelled to flee from Ephesus, where he had made his longest stay and where he had hoped that he could be protected from mob violence or any other assault. That hope had proved vain, and he again was a wanderer over the face of the earth. Neither he himself nor his churches seemed to have any prospect of freedom from persecution or any guarantee of continued life. At the same time he knew that the Corinthian church was being prejudiced against him and an earnest effort was being made to alienate it from its founder and first teacher. Now comes the news that the same work is going on in Galatia, and that it has been even more successful there than in Corinth. It began to look as if all his work was disintegrating east and west. He could not be everywhere at once, but his enemies could.

It is just in such hours when everything seems lost that the greatest generals have refused to give up hope and have rallied the forlorn cause and have snatched victory out of seeming defeat. Paul never felt more depressed in his life. He never had so much reason for discouragement. Yet his indomitable spirit rises to meet the emergency. He cannot be everywhere at once. He cannot go to Galatia at this time,

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[10] 2 Cor. 1. 8–10.

but he can write. What can be done by letter he will do. He will defend his apostolate. He will set forth his gospel anew, and he will give his reasons for it. He will plead and exhort and it may be that he will win the Galatians again to their lost religious liberty. He wrote to the Corinthians "out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears," [11] and he must have written this Epistle to the Galatians in the same stress of emotion and out of the same distress of soul. Was there ever a better example of the triumph of a human will over adverse circumstance? Was there ever a better example of

> A faith that shines more bright and clear
> When tempests rage without;
> That when in danger knows no fear,
> In darkness feels no doubt?

Paul is "pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; . . . smitten down, yet not destroyed." [12] He is physically weak and spiritually harassed; but he answers every challenge of his foes, beats them back at every point of attack, and then triumphantly sweeps the field with a fresh and undaunted and irresistible battalion of eternal principles which never have been gainsaid to this day.

We gather from this epistle that these enemies in Galatia had been saying that Paul's authority was secondary and derived. It was doubtful whether he ought to be called an apostle at all, and he surely could not claim any equality with the apostolic Twelve who had founded the church at Jerusalem. Where was Paul when Jesus was teaching in Palestine? Where was Paul when Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem? Where was Paul when the Spirit was poured out upon the church at Pentecost? The commission of the twelve was unquestioned and rested upon universal testi-

[11] 2 Cor. 2. 4.

[12] 2 Cor. 4. 8, 9.

mony as to the facts. The commission of Paul seemed to have come through a vision and to rest upon his own testimony alone. The Master had warned them that false prophets and false apostles would arise in the latter days. Who knew whether this Paul were not one of them? Surely it was only proper to ask for his authorization. What was it?

The twelve had been made apostles by the Lord himself, but Paul was an apostle "through men." [13] He had been commissioned, not by the Lord and not by the twelve apostles, and not even by the church at Jerusalem, but by the church at Antioch in Syria. He was a missionary sent out by that church and the only authority behind him was the authority of that church. All he knew had been "taught" him.[14] He had been dependent upon others from the very first. It was Ananias who instructed him in the first principles of the gospel there at Damascus, where he was converted. He received his gospel "from a man" and "through a man." [15] Ananias had laid hands upon him and sent him out to be a preacher.[16] The prophets and teachers at Antioch had laid hands upon him and sent him out to be a missionary.[17] His authorization was wholly a human one, and his gospel was a human gospel.

It was not strange, therefore, that it should turn out to be a false gospel in more respects than one. Wherever his preaching differed with that of the older apostles they might be sure that Paul had gone wrong. Now, Jesus and all his apostles had taught the strict observance of the Jewish law and of circumcision and of the sacred months and days. Anyone who said that Christians might be freed from all such obligations taught a new gospel and a different gospel from that of Jesus and the twelve.[18] They themselves

[13] Gal. 1. 1.
[14] Gal. 1. 12.
[15] Gal. 1. 1, 12.
[16] Acts 9. 17.
[17] Acts 13. 3.
[18] Gal. 1. 6.

preached "another gospel,"[19] and it alone could insure membership in the kingdom and participation in all the promises. Paul was cutting them off from all the past and from all the privileges which belonged to the children of Abraham. He was not consistent at this point. He said he was all things to all men, but that meant simply that he was "seeking the favor of men" and "striving to please men."[20] He was willing to make any sacrifice to keep the good will of those to whom he preached. He would "preach circumcision"[21] when occasion demanded and uncircumcision when he thought that he would get into no trouble by doing it. He would not have Titus circumcised, but he had circumcised Timothy. Had he not suggested the observance of certain regulations which would enable Jews and Gentiles to live together in harmony? Was not every one of these a concession that the Jews were right in these matters and that the Gentiles must acknowledge their position as the only correct one in the premises?

Paul was a timeserver, gaining the Gentiles by a false doctrine of liberty and then truckling to the Jews in certain concessions. He was so anxious to make converts that he was willing to trim the gospel to suit the individual taste. He would mutilate the message rather than alienate his hearers. The proclamation of the unabridged gospel might not be so palatable; and he gave them only what he thought they would be willing to bear. Moreover, this false gospel of his was fatal in its fruits in the individual life. Had not many of Paul's converts construed their liberty into license? At the heart of it there was unrestrained libertinism. These people who adopted Paul's doctrine walked after the flesh and fulfilled the lusts of the flesh and all the works of the flesh were manifest in their lives.

Paul writes in answer to these things: 1. I am an apostle,

[19] Gal. 1. 7.
[20] Gal. 1. 10.
[21] Gal. 5. 11.

of equal authority with any other (chapters 1, 2). 2. The gospel has superseded the law; for the law could save no man, and the gospel saves (chapters 3, 4). 3. The Christian life is a divine life, the life of Christ in man, and that means salvation from sin (chapters. 5, 6).

V. General Characteristics of the Epistle

1. Its Single Aim. There are no digressions here. There is no multiplication of issues. It is not like First Corinthians or Second Corinthians in this regard. First Corinthians took up subject after subject for discussion; Galatians has a single theme. Second Corinthians has no orderly progression of thought and the one clear and distinct discussion in it is that of its one digression concerning the collection. Galatians marches straight ahead like a battalion on parade; but the field is left covered with the slain among his foes. There is a unity of purpose and completeness of execution in the Epistle to the Galatians which is not equaled in the same space in any other of the Pauline epistles. The epistle is little but mighty, like Paul himself.

2. Its Unmitigated Severity. Usually, in the Pauline epistles immediately after the address we come upon a thanksgiving. There is no thanksgiving here. There is an anathema instead: "If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema. Though an angel from heaven should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema." [22] Paul has no praise here at the outset for the Galatians. He begins, "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing unto a different gospel." [23] Then he proceeds to castigate them for a long array of faults. Ramsay makes a list of fifteen of these, which he arranges in three groups. First, five which were fostered under their heathen religion: fornication, impurity, wantonness,

[22] Gal. 1. 8, 9.

[23] Gal. 1. 6.

idolatry, and sorcery or magic. Second, eight which were connected with the municipal life in the cities of Asia Minor: enmities, strife, rivalry, outbursts of wrath, caballings, factions, parties, jealousies. Third, two characteristic of the society and manners of the Græco-Asiatic cities: drinkings and revelings.[24] Paul has no mercy upon anything of this sort. His severity of tone is sustained throughout. "O foolish Galatians, who did bewitch you?" [25] "I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain." [26] "As many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy. . . . Henceforth let no man trouble me." [27] The epistle is one "outburst of indignant remonstrance." It is not a sermon, it is not a treatise, says Gloël, it is a sword-cut, delivered in the hour of greatest danger by a combatant who is assaulted by determined foes.[28]

3. Its Vehemence of Language. Paul was boiling over with indignation when he wrote this epistle. He was hot with righteous anger. His words pour forth "in one continuous rush, a veritable torrent—of genuine and inimitable Paulinism, like a mountain stream in full flow." Sabatier says of it, "Unfinished phrases, daring omissions, parentheses which leave us out of sight and out of breath, rabbinical subtleties, audacious paradoxes, vehement apostrophes pour on like surging billows." The epistle is an overwhelming tidal wave. It sweeps everything before it in the most ruthless fashion. Weiss says that there is something of "passionate irritation" in these words.[29] Paul is ready to summon up an imaginary angel in order to anathematize him.[30] He does not hesitate to say that he wishes these people who are making such a fuss about cir-

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[24] Ramsay, Historical Commentary on The Epistle to the Galatians, xlix.

[25] Gal. 3. 1. [26] Gal. 4. 11.

[27] Gal. 6. 16, 17. [28] Hastings's Bible Dictionary, ii, p. 93.

[29] Weiss, Introduction, I, p. 239. [30] Gal. 1. 8.

cumcision would go a step farther and cut off not the foreskin alone but the whole offending member.[31] It is not delicate language. Paul is in no mood for choosing his terms as he indites this epistle. It is Paul's *De Corona*. Like the great oration of Demosthenes, it is a personal vindication as well as the presentation of a great cause. It has been said that "in vehemence, effectiveness, and depth of conviction this epistle is paralleled only by Luther's *De Captivitate Babylonica* in which he realized his saying that his battle with the papacy required a tongue of which every word is a thunderbolt." [32]

4. **Its Sharp Contrasts.** Paul and the primitive church, Paul and Peter, the law and the gospel, liberty and bondage, circumcision and the cross, flesh and Spirit, faith and good works, Christ and the world, blessing and cursing, death and life—these are the contrasts which dominate the whole discussion of this epistle. here.

VI. General Outline of the Epistle

There are six chapters in the epistle in our versions, and they may be divided into three equal portions of two chapters each: two personal chapters, two doctrinal chapters, and two practical chapters. Of course this is only a rough general division, for there are personal references in nearly all the chapters, and doctrinal statements in all and practical suggestions in all. We follow the paragraph division in the American Revised Version.

I. *Personal*—Chapters 1, 2.
   1. Salutation, 1. 1–5.
   2. Surprise and anathema, 1. 6–10.
   3. Paul's gospel is from God, 1. 11–17.
   4. Visit to Cephas and ministry in Syria and Cilicia, 1. 18–24.
   5. Paul's gospel was recognized and ratified by Cephas, James, and John, 2. 1–10.
   6. It maintained itself against Cephas at Antioch, 2. 11–21.

[31] Gal. 5. 12.

[32] Farrar, Messages of the Books, p. 250.

II. *Doctrinal*—Chapters 3, 4.
1. The faith of Abraham, 3. 1–14.
2. Faith and the law, 3. 15–22.
3. The Christian's relation to the law and to Abraham, 3. 23–29.
4. Bondservants and sons, 4. 1–7.
5. Backsliding of the Galatians, 4. 8–11.
6. A personal appeal, contrasting their past and their present, 4. 12–20.
7. Allegory of the handmaid and the freewoman, 4. 21–31.

III. *Practical*—Chapters 5, 6.
1. Christ sets free, 5. 1.
2. Freedom and circumcision, 5. 2–12.
3. Freedom and love, 5. 13–15.
4. The Spirit and the flesh, 5. 16–24.
5. Walking by the Spirit, 5. 25.
6. Burden-bearing, 6. 1–5.
7. Sowing and reaping, 6. 6–10.
8. Personal subscription; Paul contrasts his motives with those of his foes, 6. 11–16.
9. The marks of Jesus, 6. 17.
10. Benediction, 6. 18.

The general subject of the first section is, "The Vindication of Paul's Gospel and Apostleship." The general subject of the second section is "Justification by Faith, or The Contrast between Law and Grace." The general subject of the third section is "Spiritual Liberty: Its Use and Abuse."

VII. Summaries of the Three Sections

1. **Summary of the First Section.** "I am an apostle, not from men, neither through man. I was appointed to the apostolate by the direct call of God. I did not confer with flesh and blood, but went away into Arabia. Then for years I labored in Syria and Cilicia; and was not known to any of the apostles, except Peter and James, with whom I visited at one time for fifteen days. I was an apostle before I ever saw the apostles, and they had nothing to do with my

appointment to the apostolate. Then after fourteen years I went up to Jerusalem and laid before those who were of repute the gospel which I preach, and they recognized it as valid and me as their equal in the work of propagating it. Later I publicly rebuked Peter at Antioch as his equal in authority and his superior in fidelity to the truth.

"Do my opponents say that I have been taught my gospel and that I have received it from man? From what men would I receive it? From the apostles? *I was an apostle before I ever saw an apostle; I was recognized as an equal by the apostles the first time they ever met me or heard what gospel I preached; and I have rebuked the chief of the apostles and convicted him of dissimulation and betrayal of the truth.* They are the receivers, not I. My gospel did not come from them; it came straight down from heaven. I have tested it in years of service, and I know it is true; and now if any man or if an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel to you, let him be anathema. My gospel is the gospel of God. *I have preached it without asking the permission of the apostles, and I have preached it with the official sanction of the apostles, and I have preached it in defiance of the apostles.* I am the apostle of God and my gospel is the gospel of God. I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from it and from me."

2. **Summary of the Second Section.** "Has anybody bewitched you that you think that you can become the children of Abraham by being circumcised and by observing the law of Moses? There are two kinds of children to Abraham—the Ishmaelites and the Israelites. To which would you prefer to belong? The true Israel of God are the children of Abraham by faith. Now, Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. Abraham was saved by faith and not by circumcision. He was saved by faith long before he was circumcised. In Abraham all the nations of the earth were to be saved; and they were

to be saved just as Abraham himself was saved—by faith and not by circumcision. Is anybody saved by fulfilling the whole law? No, everybody is under a curse who tries it; for he fails in his attempt and the curse of the broken law is upon him. Christ bore that penalty for us, that through faith in him we might now be saved. Was the covenant made with Abraham nullified by the giving of the law which came four hundred and thirty years afterward? No, the promise was never disannulled by the law. It was fulfilled and established in Christ. The law was merely a parenthesis in the course of that fulfillment. It was a jailer, a pedagogue, a guardian and steward, restraining and training the heir until he was capable of taking his place in the household as the recognized son. If you go back to the observance of days and months and seasons and years, you go back into bondage; you become sons of the handmaid rather than of the freewoman, Ishmaelites rather than Israelites, the children of Abraham through Hagar rather than through Sarah and the promise."

3. **Summary of the Third Section.** "For freedom did Christ set us free;" that is the keynote of the third section of the epistle. The Epistle to the Galatians has been called "The Epistle of Freedom." Godet has named the three sections of the epistle from this point of view. (1) The Apostle of Liberty. In the first two chapters Paul says: "I am the free apostle of Jesus Christ. I am independent of the authorities at Jerusalem. I am just as good an authority as they are." (2) The Doctrine of Liberty. In the third and fourth chapters Paul says, "You are in bondage if you are under the law; but you are free from the law if you are saved by faith." (3) The Life of Liberty. In the two closing chapters of the epistle Paul sets forth the ideals and the requirements of the life free from the law and enjoying the liberty of Christ. The whole epistle, then, can be summed up in one sentence: *It is the Emancipation Proclamation of all the slaves of legality, the Declaration of*

Independence issued in the name of believing humanity in defiance of the law. Like Patrick Henry's "Give me liberty or give me death," this epistle sounds the keynote of a new era of freedom for the human race.

The thought of liberty is introduced again and again. At least eleven times in the epistle the subject is suggested.[33] "For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast, therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage. . . . For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh." The freedom of this epistle is not license to do as one pleases, but it is freedom from all the bondage of legality. It is freedom from the law of rites and ordinances, under the higher law of faith and grace and love. There is the paradox in 5. 13, "Ye were called for freedom; but through love be slaves one to another,"[34] which reminds us of that other paradox in 1 Cor. 7. 22, "He that was called in the Lord being a bondservant, is the Lord's freedman: likewise he that was called being free, is Christ's bondservant." "Christians are freed from the trammels of outward law, not that they may please themselves, but that they may become slaves to the law of mutual love. The true ideal of the Christian is not freedom, but unfettered service to the love of God and man, which annihilates self, and subordinates all selfish desires to perfect love."[35]

The Christian is freed from the service of a law of external commandments only that he may serve the law of an inner life. He is above law only that he may be under law at the same time. He is set free from all bondage to a lower law only that he may become obedient to the higher law. He is no longer ruled from without; but he is still ruled from within. The law on the tables of stone no

[33] Gal. 2. 24; 3. 28; 4. 22, 23, 26, 30, 31; 5. 1–13.

[34] *Ὑμεῖς γὰρ ἐπ' ἐλευθερίᾳ ἐκλήθητε . . . ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις.*

[35] Expositor's Greek Testament, iii, p. 186.

longer menaces him, because he is subject to the law written on the tablets of his heart. The freedom of the Christian is the freedom of the Spirit. The liberty of the Christian is liberty in Christ. It is noticeable that the name of Christ occurs in this epistle forty-three times; and that in thirty-nine of these occurrences we have the personal appellation rather than the title. It is not "the Christ" but "Christ."

VIII. Effect of the Epistle upon the Galatians

The immediate effect is unknown. We have no record of any further trouble among them during the lifetime of the apostle Paul. It may be supposed, therefore, that the Judaizers were defeated and withdrew from the field. In the later Pauline epistles there are only faint and lingering traces of the conflict which bulks so large in the epistles of this group. It would seem that both in Galatia and in Corinth Paul was the acknowledged victor in this Judaistic controversy, and that he had comparatively little trouble from this source in his after life. In the next century Galatia became a hotbed of heresy. It was one of the centers of the Montanistic movement. The Ophites and the Manichæans also appeared there in considerable numbers. Two famous heretical bishops lived in Galatia in the fourth century—Marcellus the Sabellian and Basilius the Arian. Gregory Nazianzen says that Galatia abounded in many impious denominations in his day. Hausrath thinks that "the victory of a ritualistic religion, first in the Jewish form, then in the Byzantine, and finally in that of Islam, was from the outset only a matter of time among these tribes of Asia Minor. For them, a spiritual religion could only be a transient dream. The languid climate, the pressure of their own sensual nature, and the preponderant power of the imagination among Orientals, could not soon fail to corrupt every spiritual religion."[36] This opinion is doubtless influenced by the known facts of history. We

[36] Time of the Apostles, iii, p. 199.

trust that there was power enough in the Pauline type of Christianity to have effected a permanent change in this people. We hope to see it tried again, with more lasting success.

XI. Some Estimates of this Epistle

1. Luther found in it the inspiration of the Protestant Reformation. He said of it: "The Epistle to the Galatians is my epistle. I have betrothed myself to it. It is my wife." 2. McClymont: "It has done more than any other book of the New Testament for the emancipation of Christians, not only from the yoke of Judaism, but from every other form of externalism that has ever threatened the freedom and the spirituality of the gospel." [37] 3. Shaw: "It is one of the most powerful pieces of literature that have come down to us from any age. It is earnest, eloquent, dramatic; well-ordered, concise, consistent; and it handles one of the most important themes with the most significant results. . . . The church can scarcely reckon how much she owes to such a writing." [38] 4. Ramsay: "It is a unique and marvelous letter, which embraces in its six short chapters such a variety of vehement and intense emotion as could probably not be paralleled in any other work." [39] 5. Godet: "This epistle marks an epoch in the history of the race. It is the ever precious document of man's spiritual emancipation." 6. Farrar: "What Luther did at Wittenberg, and at Worms, and at Wartburg, that, and more than that, Paul did when he wrote the Epistle to the Galatians. . . . The words scrawled on those few sheets of papyrus were destined to wake echoes which have lived, and shall live forever and forever. Savonarola heard them, and Wiclif, and Huss, and Luther, and Tyndale, and Wesley. They were the Magna Charta of spiritual emancipation." [40]

[37] New Testament and Its Writers, p. 137.

[38] Shaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 84, 85.

[39] Ramsay, Historical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, lvi.

[40] Messages of the Books, p. 238.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

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I. The Roman Church

1. Its Founding. There was a Christian church in Rome to which Paul wrote this epistle. How had it come into existence? Paul says in the epistle that he himself as yet had not been in the capital city. He was the great missionary carrying the gospel through the Roman empire, but he had not been able to get as far west as Rome, though it was in his purpose to visit that city and to go on still farther west into Spain. As far as we know, none of Paul's immediate associates in missionary labors had preceded him to Rome, founding the church under his immediate direction and delegated authority. Had any other apostle, then, undertaken this task of the introduction of Christianity into the capital of the empire, and the founding of a Christian church in the City of the Seven Hills? The Roman Catholic Church maintains that the apostle Peter had the great honor of establishing the Christian faith in the city of the Cæsars, the center of world government and power. It says that he came to Rome at the beginning of the reign of the Emperor Claudius and was active in the overthrow of the heretic Simon Magus there. The authorities for this tradition are too untrustworthy to command the respect of the modern world. Practically all Protestants have refused to believe it.

Paul persistently declined to enter into another man's labors, and we feel sure that his assumption that the Roman Church was legitimately within the sphere of his influence precludes the possibility that Peter already had laid the foundations there. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that his

hope was to preach the gospel unto the parts beyond them, and not to glory in another's province in regard to things ready to his hand.[1] This seems to be a reference to his proposed work farther west and would surely rule out any knowledge on his part that any apostolic labors had been expended on that field. In this epistle he tells the Romans that it was his aim so to preach the gospel, not where Christ already was named, that he might not build upon another man's foundation.[2] These passages are sufficient to prove that Paul did not know that Peter ever had been in Rome; and we may be sure that, if Peter had been there, Paul would have heard about it. The lack of any reference to Peter's presence or preaching in Rome throughout this epistle, and the still more suggestive omission of all mention of his name in the epistles written later during Paul's imprisonment in Rome constitute a negative proof that up to that time Peter had not entered the Eternal City. We are disposed to believe that he did come later, but that he had nothing to do personally with the founding of the church. Then if neither Paul nor Peter nor any other of the apostles or more prominent evangelists or missionaries can claim the honor of laying the foundations of the Christian Church at Rome, how did any church come to be there? We do not know, and we are left largely to conjecture at this point.

It has become increasingly clear of late, however, that means of communication by person and by letter were as open to all at this time in world history as at any later period until we come to the last century. The Roman roads made travel easy and the Roman empire had established a good postal system. It was an ordinary thing to make long journeys, and removal from city to city was a quite common experience. Greetings are sent to Aquila and Priscilla in this epistle, and we learn from various

[1] 2 Cor. 10. 16.

[2] Rom. 15. 20.

sources in the New Testament that they had resided originally in Rome and then had moved to Corinth and later to Ephesus and finally had returned to Rome. Aquila was a native of Pontus, and he and his wife were tentmakers, and it seems to have been a comparatively easy thing for them to fold their tents like the Arabs and quietly steal away to some other habitat whenever an imperial rescript or the exigencies of business or the impulse to missionary labors suggested another field of work. They may have been more nomadic in their habits than most of the Christians, but doubtless many others traveled throughout the empire and many came to Rome from Jerusalem and Galilee and Asia Minor and Greece and settled there. After a time these Christian immigrants may have become sufficient in number to form an organization of their own. Thus gradually a church may have come into existence, looking to no single person or to any one apostle as its founder, but representing the results of the Christian propaganda through all the farther East.

2. **Its Composition.** From the epistle itself we would gather that there were both Jews and Gentiles in the church at Rome. In 2. 17-24 Paul directly addresses the Jew. In 4. 1 he speaks of "Abraham our forefather according to the flesh." In 7. 1 he says, "I speak to them that know the law." A large part of the epistle would be of chief interest to the Jews, since it discusses the value of the Mosaic law and the dealings of God with the chosen people of Israel. There is continuous appeal to the authority of the Old Testament, and much of the argument is of a nature to which those accustomed to the methods of the rabbis would be most likely to give heed. These internal phenomena would be sufficient to show that there was a considerable number of Jews in the Roman church, and that Paul had the Jews particularly in mind more than once in his writings. On the other hand, in the salutation Paul numbers the Romans among the Gentiles or the nations to

whom he had been given the grace of apostleship (1. 5-7). In the next paragraph he tells them that he had purposed to visit them in order that he might have some fruit among them, even as among the rest of the Gentiles (1. 13). In 11. 13 Paul says, "I speak to you that are Gentiles." "Inasmuch as I am an apostle of the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry." In 15. 15 he reminds them that he writes the more boldly unto them because the grace has been given him to be a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles.

Both classes, then, both Jews and Gentiles, are in the church and Paul addresses now one and now another in the course of the epistle. Which formed the dominant element? Koppe, Bauer, Schwegler, Thiersch, Davidson, and Wordsworth thought the Jews were in the ascendency. Beyschlag thought that it was a church of proselytes, of Gentile birth and Jewish training. Schürer thought that they were neither Palestinian Jews nor Pauline converts, but Hellenists from the Diaspora. Holtzmann thought that Paul was altogether uncertain as to the complexion of the church, and so varied his style and his address as he wrote to them. Meyer, DeWette, Olshausen, Tholuck, Reuss, Neander, Weizsäcker, Godet, Sanday, Denney, Shaw, and most of the later English writers have decided that the Gentiles formed the majority. There is no way of determining the exact proportion of these two classes, but the prevailing tendency at the present time is to conclude that the church was a Gentile church with a large and influential Jewish minority.

The population of Rome numbered a million and a half in Paul's day, and there were only fifty or sixty thousand Jews among them. The slaves outnumbered the freemen two to one or three to one. There were converts to Christianity out of all classes. Lanciani, in his Pagan and Christian Rome, declares that "recent excavations in Rome give quite startling evidence of how the gospel found its way at an early period to the mansions of the great, and even

to the palace of the Cæsars." [3] Sanday concludes that "we should be justified in supposing that even at this early date more than one of the Roman Christians possessed a not inconsiderable social standing and importance. If there was any church in which the 'not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble,' had an exception, it was at Rome." [4] However, the majority of those to whom Paul sends personal greetings are either slaves or freedmen; and, since they formed such a large majority of the population, in all probability they formed by far the larger part of the church.

The Jewish ghetto was in the low districts of the Trastevere, on the right bank of the river, on the slopes of the Janiculum. Somewhere in this district the first Christian assembly may have been organized; or the Christians may have met here and there throughout the city in private homes. They were Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor. The Gentiles and the poor were in the majority. The rich and the Jews were an influential minority. They were founding a church which was to be the center of Christendom for many centuries in later history.

II. When, Where, and Why Was the Epistle Written?

We already have said that the Epistle to the Romans belongs to the second group of the Pauline epistles. This group includes First and Second Corinthians, Galatians and Romans. These epistles probably were written in the order in which we have named them. Galatians and Romans are much alike in matter and form, and Galatians seems like the first draft of the argument which has been elaborated and perfected in Romans. We think that Romans must have been written soon after the composition of Galatians. Galatians was written some time in the winter of A. D. 57-58, and Romans in the early spring of A. D.

[3] Lanciani, Pagan and Christian Rome, p. 10.

[4] Sanday, Commentary on Romans, p. xxxv.

58. Both Galatians and Romans were written in Corinth, while Paul was there as the guest of Gaius, who helped him to the leisure and the conveniences so necessary to the meditation and the composition of two such epistles.

We can imagine him there pacing up and down the floor, pausing now and then at the window or the door to look out upon the city street or to get a breath of the early spring air, or sitting for long intervals in his chair in a dark corner with his head in his hands as he pondered the fitting expression for the great truths he would set forth to the strangers and friends there at Rome, while Tertius, the amanuensis, sat in the light by the window with his reed pen in his hand and the strips of papyrus before him, waiting for the dictation of the master and then writing as fast as he could make his pen fly when the torrent of words burst upon him.

What was Paul's purpose in writing to the Romans? 1. He wished this letter to prepare the Romans for his impending visit. It would serve to introduce him to them and would give them a taste of his gospel and the salient features of his teaching. 2. Paul's life was at hazard continually. He did not know at what moment it might be taken away. Weiss conjectures that Paul had in mind "the idea that this epistle might possibly be his testament to the church and to Christendom generally." [5] Therefore he formulates more fully and more carefully than he ever has before his whole body of doctrine. It is a last legacy, the sacred deposit of the truth intrusted to him which he now sends to the capital city to be kept by the Christians there for the Christians of the whole empire. 3. There seems to have been a temporary lull in Paul's stormy career at just this time. The troubles at Corinth at last have been quieted. Paul's victory is complete. It seems to him a fitting time to put into permanent form the preaching which has ap-

[5] Weiss, Introduction to the New Testament, I, p. 307.

proved itself through storm and stress and is at last in possession of the field. He is in a hospitable home. He is surrounded with friends. He has comparative leisure and peace. He decides to take time to write a sort of systematic theology, to fix in literary form the final product of his religious and theological thinking.

He may have been aware of certain controversies in the Roman church which suggested particular lines of thought to him. He may have known of differences between certain factions of the church which led him to emphasize conciliatory positions. He may have heard that his Jewish antagonists had reached Rome and circulated their slanders against him there. The epistle therefore may have apologetic and irenic and polemic elements in it, and the exact proportion of these, in our ignorance of the facts, we never shall be able to determine; but in the epistle itself we have the final result of whatever motives led to its composition, and this result proves to be a somewhat systematic development of the Pauline theology. It may have been Paul's intention that the epistle should embody his doctrinal teaching. Godet sums up his discussion of this subject in these words: "To set free the kingdom of God from the Jewish wrapping which had served as its cradle, such was the work of Paul. This task he carried out by his life in the domain of action, and by the Epistle to the Romans in the domain of thought. This letter is, as it were, the theory of his missionary preaching, and of his spiritual life, which is one with his work." [6]

III. Main Features of the Epistle

1. **A Theological Epistle.** Paul has put into this letter his doctrine and his experience. His theology was the outgrowth of his own spiritual life. Therefore in these paragraphs of systematic theology we catch glimpses of Paul's spiritual biography. It is a final and formal presentation of

[6] Godet, Commentary on Romans, p. 58.

the product of his own acquisition, inspiration, and thought. Luther called the epistle *absolutissima epitome evangelii.* Melanchthon called it *doctrinæ Christianæ compendium,* and he wrote his own *Loci Communes* in 1521, the first systematic theology of the Protestant Reformation, with the doctrine of this epistle as its basis. Modern authorities concur in this estimate of the epistle. Hausrath declares that it is "the essential content of what Paul otherwise preached by word of mouth." Hilgenfeld describes it as "a complete presentation of the gospel which Paul preached among the Gentiles." Pfleiderer says that it is "an objective development of the truth of the gospel, drawn from the nature of the gospel itself." [7] Findlay concludes that "the Epistle to the Romans is the complete and mature expression of the apostle's main doctrines, which it unfolds in due order and proportion, and combines into an organic whole. No other New Testament writing except the Epistle to the Hebrews approaches so nearly the character of a doctrinal treatise. For the purposes of systematic theology, it is the most important book in the Bible." [8]

Here we find adequate discussion of anthropology and soteriology, redemption and sanctification, the wrath of God and the righteousness of God, the work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, natural religion and Christian ethics, the theology of salvation and the theology of history and the theology of the Christian life. The great antinomies and paradoxes of the Christian faith are faced without flinching and discussed without dodging. The downright honesty and the profound logic of the apostle have appealed to Augustine and Martin Luther and John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards. This epistle has had a dominant influence in fixing the dogma of the Christian Church from the beginning to the present day. Great controversies have raged over the definitions of its terms and the inferences

[7] Expositor's Greek Testament, II, pp. 570, 571.

[8] Findlay, The Epistles of Paul, p. 149.

from its theology, but all combatants have been disposed to claim that they represented Paul fairly and were his loyal interpreters.

Of course in an epistle of this size there cannot be an exhaustive discussion of all the various elements of Christian theology. That which is less emphatic here finds fuller expression in other epistles. (1) Eschatology is not made as prominent here as in the Epistles to the Thessalonians. (*a*) The word "heaven" occurs only twice in the epistle, once in mentioning the wrath of God from heaven and once in quoting from Deuteronomy the question, "Who shall ascend into heaven" (to bring Christ down)? We would learn little of the details of the life after death from this epistle. The certainty of eternal life is set before us, but we are told nothing more about it. The theology of the epistle is of practical value for the life that now is. It has the promise of the life to come, but it has no description of it. (*b*) The words "Hades" or "Gehenna" or "Tartarus"—the New Testament words for "hell"—are not to be found in this epistle. The word "devil" does not occur in it. The name "Satan" occurs only once, in the gracious promise, "God . . . shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."[9] (2) There is no allusion to the cross in this epistle, though the death of Christ receives its significant treatment more than once. (3) The thought of the resurrection and of the resurrection life underlies a large part of the discussion in the epistle, but the resurrection itself is not treated so fully as in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. (4) The church is mentioned only once, and then only in its local and restricted sense, when toward the close of the epistle Gaius is commended for his hospitality to Paul and to the whole church. The Epistle to the Ephesians is the church epistle. (5) Little or nothing is said about the Person of Christ in this epistle. The work of Christ is to the front here. In

[9] Rom. 16. 20.

comparison, Colossians and Ephesians and Philippians are all Christological epistles. (6) There is less of local coloring in this epistle than in most of the others. We learn little about the condition of the church, and it is possible that Paul knew very little about it. We find no references to current events or contemporary world history. It was a period of peace, in those first best years of Nero's reign before he had developed the qualities which made him infamous in both Christian and pagan memory. In a treatise of this sort there was no necessity for the mention of these things. The body of the epistle is impersonal and general in its treatment of the great issues of the Christian's creed.

2. **Answers to Charges.** The Second Epistle to the Corinthians is an answer to Paul's slanderers, but most of the charges made against him at Corinth were personal rather than doctrinal. It may be that in this epistle we get glimpses of some of the charges made against Paul's doctrinal teaching. The discussion again and again takes on the character of a reply to a personal antagonist, and sometimes there is the sharp give-and-take of a dialogue debate. In the interrogations and objections Paul introduces into his argument we think we can detect the personal Jewish antagonist whom he has faced so many times and with whose methods of retort he is so familiar. We gather that there were those who said (1) that Paul made the law of none effect, and, worse still, made the law sinful and the instigator to sin.[10] (2) Paul was slanderously reported to have said, "Let us do evil, that good may come."[11] (3) Some said that Paul taught that Christians were no longer under law and were free to sin in order that grace might the more abound.[12] (4) Paul had been branded as an apostate, who had transferred his allegiance and his affec-

[10] Rom. 3. 31; 7. 7.
[11] Rom. 3. 8.
[12] Rom. 6. 1, 15.

tion from his own people to the heathen nations.[13] (5) Possibly there were those who charged that Paul's doctrine of Christian freedom had raised up a set of emancipated people who despised their weaker brethren and so caused dissensions and ill feeling in the church.[14]

3. **The Universal Outlook.** The fact that Paul was writing to Rome may be responsible for the universal outlook of the epistle. It was appropriate that the theology of a world religion should be formulated for the church in the world capital. Paul had the largest conceptions of the future of the faith. He believed that Christianity would be the religion of all the Roman world. He believed in the universal redemption wrought in the Christ. He believed that Jew and Gentile some time would be united in the Christian Church. He believed that he was laying the foundations of a church which would be as wide as the race and which sooner or later would bring all men into one glorious unity in Christ. What he has to say in this epistle is of interest to all.

"The word 'All,' as has been truly observed, is the governing word of the entire epistle. All—for whatever the modifications may be which may be thought necessary, Paul does not himself make them—all are equally guilty, all are equally redeemed. All have been temporarily rejected, all shall be ultimately received. All shall be finally brought into living harmony with that God who is above all, and through all, and in all—by whom, and from whom, and unto whom all things are and all things tend."[15] It has been well said that "the thought which runs through the whole epistle is the universality of sin and the universality of grace. Its four main positions are: (1) All are guilty before God. (2) All need a Saviour. (3) Christ died for all. (4) We are all one body in Him."[16] Few, if any, of

[13] Rom. 9-11. [14] Rom. 12-15.

[15] Farrar, Life of Paul, p. 468.

[16] Wordsworth, Epistles, p. 200.

the other apostles had the enterprise to look beyond the limits of their local interests to the unlimited future triumph of the faith. Paul was the imperialist statesman among them. The world was his parish. Wherever he might be laboring for the time he was organizing a part of the great unity in which the universal church some time would be joined together in the adoration of the Christ.

4. **Its Forensic Form.** The Greeks sought after wisdom, and when Paul was writing letters to the Corinthians and to the Ephesians he laid great emphasis upon the acquisition of the true wisdom. Rome was not seeking wisdom so much as the universal recognition of law and order. Its mission was to establish justice throughout the length and the breadth of the earth. That may account for the fact that in writing this theological treatise for the Romans Paul has chosen to give it a legal, logical, forensic framework throughout. The race is summoned before the judgment bar of God. The justice of God is manifested in both his condemnation and his acquittal. The Christian's condition is represented under the figure of the Roman process of adoption. Paul has great respect for the Roman magistrates and urges obedience to them in everything. His respect for the central seat of world government and the great source of just and equitable laws may have influenced him in the framing of his thought.

5. **Its Dependence upon the Old Testament.** Every doctrine of the epistle is shown to have Old Testament authority behind it. There are more than sixty quotations from the Old Testament in these sixteen chapters—more than in all the other Pauline epistles put together. The phrase, "according as it is written," occurs nineteen times. Take the quotations out of any one division of the doctrinal discussion, and it would seem as if the foundations had been removed. Remove the quotations from some of these pages, and it would seem as if the substance had disappeared and the merest skeleton were remaining. The

Roman law may have furnished a part of the framework, but the Old Testament has furnished the substantial norm upon which all the apostle's thinking has builded. His Christian theology has a genuinely and loyally Jewish basis.

IV. Some Estimates of the Epistle

1. Chrysostom had this epistle read to him twice a week. 2. Melanchthon copied it twice with his own hands. 3. Luther: "This epistle is the true masterpiece of the New Testament, the purest gospel. It deserves not only to be known word for word by every Christian but to be the subject of his meditation day by day, the daily bread of his soul; for it can never be too much or too well studied and the more time one spends on it the more precious it becomes, the better it appears. . . . This epistle is to my mind at the same time a commentary upon, and an epitome of, all the Sacred Scripture and always its light and apocalypse." These quotations are from Luther's preface to his Commentary upon the Epistle to the Romans, and we recall that it was while one read from this preface in the little Moravian meeting in Aldersgate Street in London that John Wesley listened until he felt his "heart strangely warmed," and he felt that he did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation. Paul was responsible for all Protestantism through Martin Luther, and Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans for all Methodism through the conversion of John Wesley. 4. Calvin: "It opens the door to all the treasures of the Scriptures." 5. Matthew Henry: "If we compare scripture with scripture, in the Old Testament, David's Psalms, and in the New Testament, Paul's epistles are stars of the first magnitude, that differ from other stars in glory"; but Romans "is superlatively excellent, the largest and fullest of all." 6. Tholuck calls it "a Christian philosophy of universal history." 7. Chambers: "The intelligence and stability of any generation of believers is exactly proportioned to the degree in which this marrowy and mas-

culine treatise is studied and understood and appreciated." 8. Godet: "We feel ourselves at every word face to face with the unfathomable. Our experience is somewhat analogous to what we feel when contemplating the great masterpieces of mediæval architecture, such, for example, as the Cathedral of Milan. We do not know which to admire the more, the majesty of the whole or the finish of the details, and every look makes the discovery of some new perfection. . . . The Epistle to the Romans is the cathedral of the Christian faith."[17] When Godet was preparing his commentary on Romans he told a friend that there were passages in the epistle on which he had written ten times, and even then he was not satisfied. In his Studies on the Epistles Godet pronounces Romans to be "the greatest masterpiece which the human mind had ever conceived and realized, the first logical exposition of the work of God in Christ for the salvation of the world."[18] 9. Farrar: "This is the greatest of Paul's epistles and one of the greatest and deepest and most memorably influential of all compositions ever written by human pen. . . . It is unquestionably the clearest and fullest statement of the doctrine of sin and the doctrine of deliverance as held by the greatest of the apostles. It is Paul's definition of what he understood as the gospel of Christ." 10. Sanday: "It is one of the most original of writings. No Christian can have read it for the first time without feeling that he was introduced to heights and depths of Christianity of which he had never been conscious before. . . . It is a body of teaching which eighteen centuries of Christian interpreters have failed to exhaust."[19] 10. Deissmann: "How are we to explain the mighty influence exerted by the Epistle to the Romans upon the Christianity of so many centuries? How came a writing that took its rise under such simple conditions, to be fifteen centuries

[17] Godet, Commentary, p. 1.

[18] Godet, Studies on the Epistles, p. 140.

[19] Sanday, Commentary, pp. xli, xliv.

afterward the Magna Charta of evangelical Protestantism? In the first place, it might be said, the Epistle to the Romans is the most ecumenical of all the Pauline letters. Compared with Second Corinthians, it is relatively impersonal, generally intelligible; and it lacks the numerous allusions and intimate relations which so seriously obstruct the understanding of that epistle. But it is self-evident that the main ground of the powerful influence exerted on Christendom by the Roman Epistle lies, not in its formal characteristic, but in the object itself. It was the religious power concealed in the epistle that made such a deep impression on Augustine and Luther; it is this which so deeply impresses still every evangelically disposed conscience. We stand upon volcanic soil in reading this epistle. Paul wrote it, indeed, under conditions of greater outward and inner calm than many of the rest of his letters, but it too was written by him with his heart's blood. It contains confessions of a struggling prophetic soul; fire, holy fire, glows between its lines. This holy Divine flame is what warms and interpenetrates us. The deep understanding of human misery, the terrible shuddering before the power of sin, but at the same time the jubilant rejoicing of the redeemed child of God—this is what for all time assures to the Roman Epistle a victorious sway over the hearts of men who are sinful and who thirst for redemption. . . . It has a power not to be destroyed by any lapse or change of time." [20]

V. Outline and Contents

A. Introduction, 1. 1-15.

I. Official, 1. 1-7. These verses cover a single sentence of salutation, which forms a worthy introduction to a worthy epistle. Farrar says of this salutation: "It is the longest and most solemnly emphatic of those found in any of the Pauline epistles. . . . In one grand single sentence, of which the unity is not lost in spite of digressions, ampli-

[20] Expository Times, xi, p. 110.

fications, and parentheses, he tells the Roman Christians of his solemn setting apart, by grace, to the apostolate; of the object and universality of that apostolate; of the truth that the gospel is no daring novelty, but the preordained fulfillment of a dispensation prophesied in Scripture; of Christ's descent from David according to the flesh, and of his establishment with power as the Son of God according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead. We ask, as we read the sentence, whether anyone has ever compressed more thoughts into fewer words, and whether any letter was ever written which swept so vast a horizon in its few opening lines." [21] Beet calls this sentence "a crystal arch spanning the gulf between the Jew of Tarsus and the Christians of Rome. Paul begins by giving his name: he rises to the dignity of his office, and then to the gospel he proclaims. From the gospel he ascends to its great subject-matter, to Him who is Son of David and Son of God. From this summit of his arch he passes on to the apostleship again, and to the nations for whose good he received it. Among these nations he finds the Christians at Rome. He began to build by laying down his own claims; he finished by acknowledging theirs. The gulf is spanned. Across the waters of national separation Paul has flung an arch whose firmly knit segments are living truths, and whose keystone is the incarnate Son of God. Over this arch he hastens with words of greeting from his Father and their Father, from his Master and their Master. Every word increases the writer's claim upon the attention of his readers." [22]

II. Personal, 1. 8-15.

B. The Treatise, 1. 16 to 15. 13. (A) The Doctrinal Treatise, 1. 16 to 11. 36. I. The Theology of Salvation, 1. 16 to 8. 39. (I) The Theology of Redemption, 1. 16 to 5. 21. 1. Its Summary, 1. 16, 17. This is the text of the

[21] Farrar, Life of Paul, p. 459.

[22] Beet, Commentary on Romans, p. 38.

following discussion. It contains the first quotation from the Old Testament, and Paul makes the statement of Habakkuk the subject of his whole discourse.

2. The Wrath of God upon the Whole World, 1. 18 to 3. 20. This section sets forth the appalling need of redemption, first for the Gentiles and then for the Jews. (1) The Wrath of God on the Gentiles, 1. 18-32. (*a*) The wrath of God revealed, 1. 18-23; (*b*) In giving them up to uncleanness, 1. 24, 25; and (*c*) In giving them up to vile passions, 1. 26, 27; and (*d*) In giving them up to a reprobate mind, 1. 28-32. It is an awful picture which Paul here paints of the degradation and the viciousness of the ancient heathen world. It is not too black to be true to the life. Looking out of his window there at Corinth while he was dictating this epistle, Paul could see on the Corinthian streets the evidences of the exact truthfulness of his fearful indictment. (2) The Wrath of God on the Jews, 2. 1 to 3. 8, (*a*) Who judge the Gentiles, 2. 1-16, but (*b*) Commit the same sins, 2. 17-29, and (*c*) Are not shielded by special privileges, 3. 1-8. Paul proceeds carefully here, but his logic is inexorable. The sinning Jew is just as badly off as the Gentile. The wrath of God rests upon him just as surely. (3) All of this is according to the Scripture, 3. 9-18. Paul stops to pile up Scripture references in defense of his positions. They are most of them from the poetry of the Old Testament and are not to be pressed too literally, but they are sufficient to show the general estimate set upon sinners in the word of God. (4) Therefore, every mouth is stopped, 3. 19, 20. All of this is preliminary to the proclamation of the possibility of salvation through faith in Christ.

3. The Righteousness of God Manifested to All, 3. 21 to 5. 21. (1) Through faith in Christ, 3. 21-30. Olshausen calls this paragraph "the Acropolis of the Christian faith." Calvin says, "There is probably no passage in the whole Bible that sets forth more profoundly the justifying right-

eousness of God." Stolz says, "Whosoever understands it understands the apostle; whosoever misunderstands it runs the risk of misunderstanding the entire epistle." Martin Luther put a mark opposite the twenty-fifth verse in his Bible, and wrote in the margin, "Mark this; this is the chief point and the very central place of the epistle and of the whole Bible." Vitringa called this paragraph "the brief summary of divine wisdom." The poet Cowper found peace for his well-nigh despairing heart in reading the twenty-fifth verse. (2) This gospel is in harmony with the law, 3. 31. (3) As shown in the case of Abraham, 4. 1-25, Paul proves that Abraham received everything by faith, his righteousness, his inheritance, and his son. The father of the chosen race is the father of the faithful in a fuller and a higher and a primary sense. (4) This righteousness of God gives peace, joy, and salvation, 5. 1-11. (5) The possibility of this righteousness is as universal as the curse, 5. 12-21. The remedy is sufficient to meet the need. Has Paul shown that all men have come short of the glory of God? He has gone on to show that all men may be redeemed unto eternal life. What is this experience into which the believer is ushered by faith? Paul has set forth in order, first, the need of redemption, and second, the method of redemption, and now he comes, third, to the results of redemption, namely, the Christian life.

(II) Sanctification, or, The Theology of the Christian Life, Chapters 6, 7, 8. 1. Sanctification is in Christ dead and risen again, 6. 1-11. It gives (1) Dominion over sin, 6. 12-14, and (2) Freedom from sin, 6. 15-23, and (3) Freedom from the law, 7. 1-6, (*a*) which led into bondage to sin, 7. 7-25. It is a high standard for the Christian life which Paul here sets up. Some think that it is too high to be attainable in this life. They think that even the grace of God and the power of God are insufficient to lift the weakness of human flesh and the human will to such a plane. Others are equally sure that it is attainable, but "only in

two jumps." Faith never could lift a sinner into such a triumphant life at the moment of his acceptance of the Saviour. It must be developed by growth in grace and it must be chastened by various experiences of failure before it can gather itself together for the mighty effort necessary to bring about so blessed a consummation. Paul seems sublimely unconscious both of those who think that he is talking nonsense and setting forth impossibilities and of those who think he ought to have made certain definite divisions in the development of his program. It is all as simple as the sunshine to him. All men need to be saved. All men may be saved by faith. Salvation means salvation from sin. It is attainable by faith at any time. Human effort never could reach it. The pitiable straits into which it brings even the most earnest and devout are pictured in the seventh chapter. The Holy Spirit will help the human struggle. Paul hastens to make that clear at once.

2. Sanctification is through the Holy Spirit, 8. 1-30. (1) He gives victory over sin and death, 8. 1-11, and (2) The witness to adoption, 8. 12-17, and (3) The completion of salvation, 8. 18-25, and (4) Successful intercession, 8. 26-30. Paul's heart is so warmed as he pictures the work of the Holy Spirit in this eighth chapter that he is constrained to close with a lyric burst of praise.

(III) Final Hymn of Assurance, 8. 31-39. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? The chapter begins with "no condemnation" and it ends with "no separation." This closes the discussion of the theology of salvation. Paul has shown us the whole world lying under the wrath of God, and then the righteousness of God offered to the whole world. Then he has pictured the Christian life, aided by the Holy Spirit and identified with the life of Christ. He turns now to the problem of the rejection of Israel.

II. The Theology of History, chapters 9, 10, 11. (I) In Relation to the Past, 9. 1-33. 1. The privileges of Israel,

Godet On Romans

Sunday

9. 1-5. 2. Election among the elect, 9. 6-13. 3. According to God's will, 9. 14-18. 4. Leading to Gentile salvation, 9. 19-29. 5. And Jewish rejection, 9. 30-33. (II) In Relation to the Present, 10. 1-21. 1. Israel is not subject to God, 10. 1-15. 2. And not hearing the gospel, 10. 16-21. (III) In Relation to the Future, 11. 1-36. 1. A remnant saved, 11. 1-10. 2. Israel's loss, Gentile gain, 11. 11-24. 3. Israel's final salvation, 11. 25-32. 4. Closing apostrophe, 11. 33-36. Paul closed his study of the religious life in the eighth chapter with a hymn of praise to the love of God. He closes his study of this most pressing theological problem of his day with a hymn of praise to the wisdom and the knowledge of God. He loves always. He does always for the best. Paul is ready at this point to say "Amen!" and then, as his custom is in his epistles, he turns from the doctrinal presentation to exhortations concerning the daily life.

(B) The Practical Treatise, 12. 1 to 15. 13. I. The Christian Life, 12. 1 to 13. 14. 1. Complete consecration, 12. 1, 2. 2. Humility in the use of gifts, 12. 3-8. 3. Perfect love, 12. 9-21. 4. Subjection to the civil power, 13. 1-7. 5. Summary of the law, 13. 8-10. 6. Salvation at hand, 13. 11-14. It often has been noted that in this chapter and the preceding we have a series of close parallels to the sayings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Knowling says, "It is not too much to add that the apostle's description of the kingdom of God reads like a brief summary of its description in the Sermon on the Mount: the righteousness, peace, and joy, which form the contents of the kingdom in the apostle's conception, are found side by side in the Saviour's beatitudes." [23]

II. Practical Christian Brotherhood, 14. 1 to 15. 13. 1. Differences of opinion are not grounds of condemnation, 14. 1-12. 2. Self-denial enjoined, 14. 13-23. 3. Mutual helpfulness commended, 15. 1-13.

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[23] Knowling, Witness of the Epistles, p. 312.

C. Conclusion, 15. 14 to 16. 27. 1. Paul's apostolate, 15. 14-21. 2. Paul's journeys, 15. 22-29. 3. Paul asks for prayers, 15. 30-33. 4. Paul commends Phœbe, 16. 1-2. 5. Paul salutes many, 16. 3 16. 6. A warning against divisions, 16. 17-20. 7. Signatures, 16. 21-24. 8. The doxology, 16. 25-27. This, the longest and most weighty of the Pauline epistles, closes with the longest and most elaborate of his doxologies. It is a curious fact that in the Greek the sentence is an incomplete one.

VI. Integrity of the Epistle

This is one of the four great Pillar Epistles—First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans. No serious attack has been made upon its authenticity or its integrity, as far as the main body of the epistle is concerned. The case is somewhat different, however, with the last two chapters. The following facts have led to much questioning and discussion concerning them:

1. Marcion omitted these two chapters from his edition of the epistle. However, we know that his New Testament was not made up solely on critical grounds. It was the product not of research into questions of authenticity so much as the agreement with Marcion's own theological bias. He would have rejected these chapters if they had not suited his preconceived opinions, without considering the question of the genuineness of their authorship at all.

2. The epistle seems to end at three different places. At 15. 33 we read, "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen." Again at 16. 20 we read, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." Then at the close comes the elaborate doxology, 16. 25-27. After the first benediction, the commendation of Phœbe and the salutations are added as a sort of postscript, and then a paragraph of warning and promise, followed by the second benediction, as though Paul had intended to close his epistle again. Then, as a second postscript, salutations are sent from a group of the

Corinthians who may have been present in the room as these final words were being written, and then comes the finally closing doxology. We do not know the circumstances which led to this triple ending of the epistle. If we knew all the circumstances, it might be perfectly clear why Paul twice had reconsidered his intention of cutting short the already unusually lengthy epistle. It frequently happens to-day that a letter is written with a number of postscripts.

3. The doxology appears in the manuscripts and versions in strangely varying positions. (1) In ℵ, B, C, D, E, and in the Peshito and the Vulgate and the Memphitic and the Æthiopic versions it is found where we have it, at the very close of the epistle. The best authorities place it here. (2) In L, most of the cursives, the Greek lectionaries, the Greek commentators except Origen, and the later Syriac, Gothic, Armenian, and Slavic versions the doxology comes at the end of chapter 14. The lectionaries may be responsible for this. The personal matters in the last two chapters may not have been considered suitable for public reading and therefore may have been omitted from the lectionaries, while the doxology was too precious to be lost in the public readings and it therefore was moved up to the close of the fourteenth chapter. From the lectionaries this arrangement may have passed into later manuscripts and versions. (3) The doxology is found both at the end of the fourteenth chapter and at the end of the sixteenth chapter in A, P, 17, and the oldest Armenian version. (4) It is omitted altogether in F and G, but F leaves a space for it at the end, while G leaves a space between chapters 14 and 15.

Upon the ground of these and other facts Lightfoot came to the conclusion that Paul some time in his later life put a second edition of this epistle into circulation, omitting the last two chapters, and at that time adding the doxology which did not originally belong to the epistle. Hort, Gifford, and Sanday have answered Lightfoot's suggestion in able fashion. We know too little to be sure of anything

at this point. We have the facts in hand, but the explanation of the facts must be a matter of conjecture forevermore.

4. In 1829 David Schulz made the suggestion that the sixteenth chapter with its very unusual number of personal salutations belonged not to the Epistle to the Romans but to a copy of this epistle or some other epistle sent either by Paul or by a Paulinist editor somewhere else, and most probably to Ephesus. This hypothesis has found favor with a great many modern critics. Among them are Eichhorn, Weiss, Jülicher, Hausrath, Holtzmann, Holsten, Pfleiderer, Krenkel, Lipsius, Ewald, Richter, Renan, Reuss, Ritschl, Laurent, Schürer, Sabatier, Völter, von Soden, Weizsäcker, Schmiedel, McGiffert, Bacon, Farrar, Adeney, Scott, and others. The chief reasons for deciding that this chapter cannot belong to the Epistle to the Romans are:

(1) Paul is writing to strangers at Rome, but in this chapter he seems to know all about the internal condition of the church, with its dangers from divisions and occasions of stumbling, and he seems to be certain of the doctrine which had been taught to them. He had lived two years and more at Ephesus. He would know these things concerning the church there as a matter of course. Would he be at all likely to know them about the church at Rome? It is surely true that in the body of the Epistle to the Romans we find no trace of such knowledge.

(2) The number of salutations, twenty-six in all, points to a church in which Paul was well acquainted, as the church in Ephesus, rather than to one which he never had visited, as the church in Rome. He salutes only one or two persons sometimes in churches which he himself had founded. Would he be likely to send his largest number of salutations, more than in any other epistle, to a church where he had lived longer than anywhere else in the mission field or to a church which he never had seen? Zahn thinks the latter. He says that in writing to churches where he was well acquainted with all the membership Paul could not single

out special individuals for recognition and salutation without making invidious distinctions or without having special reasons, but it was not so at Rome. In writing to this strange church Paul would be all the more anxious to emphasize the personal relations which he had had with individual members among them, and to make it evident that there were many and substantial connecting ties already established between himself and the church to which he had taken the liberty to write. Zahn strengthens his contention by pointing out the fact that there is not a single salutation or other communication intended for individual members in the church to be found at the close of the letters sent to Thessalonica, Corinth, Philippi, and Galatia. On the contrary, at the close of the letter to the Colossians, written to a church which Paul never had seen and the most unimportant church to which he ever wrote an epistle, we find the greetings of six different individuals, only one of whom ever had been at Colossæ; and Paul himself sends special greetings to individuals at Colossæ and at Laodicea. There, as at Rome, he would have the church feel that it was far from being altogether strange to him; and he emphasizes his intimate relations with, and personal affection for, the members whom he knew.[24]

(3) The persons greeted seem to belong to Ephesus rather than to Rome. Aquila and Priscilla were at Ephesus just a few months before Paul wrote to the Romans, and in the next mention of them in the New Testament, some eight or nine years later, they still are at Ephesus.[25] Is it at all likely that in the interim they would have moved to Rome and then moved back to Ephesus again? Is it not more probable that they lived at Ephesus all the time, and that this greeting was sent to them there? It may be more probable, but it is altogether possible that these people had moved twice in this time. They were of the moving kind.

[24] Zahn, Introduction, I, pp. 382–3.

[25] 1 Cor. 16. 19; 2 Tim. 4. 9.

They had lived at Rome, at Corinth, and at Ephesus. They may have moved to Rome again and then moved back to Ephesus. Again, it is suggested that Epænetus is called "the first fruits of Asia." [26] This means that he was a resident of Ephesus or its immediate neighborhood when he was converted. Would it not be more probable that he was living there still than that he was in the far-off city of Rome? Possibly so; but Zahn suggests again that Epænetus as the first convert of Asia may have owed his salvation to Aquila and Priscilla before he had made the acquaintance of Paul, and that he has accompanied this worthy couple from Ephesus to Rome, in order to prepare quarters in that city for the apostle, even as they had done previously in Ephesus. He suggests, further, that Paul's commendation of them would sound very strange in a letter to the Ephesian church. The Ephesians knew these people well. They knew what sacrifices they had made in Paul's behalf. They did not need to be told of these things. On the other hand, it was perfectly natural for Paul to write to Rome that all the churches of the Gentiles were indebted to this Jewish couple, and it was perfectly natural for Paul to send his first greetings to them and their first Asian convert, if they were in a sense his forerunners and representatives there in Rome. All of this seems possible and plausible enough on the basis of the suppositions made; and anyone is free to make any supposition he pleases in the lack of any definite information as to these things.[27]

(4) So many others mentioned here are Paul's kinsmen and fellow workers and fellow prisoners and are his beloved friends, standing in such relations of intimate fellowship and affection that we look for them in a church where Paul had had a long sojourn and had undergone many perils. Andronicus, Junias, Ampliatus, Urbanus, Stachys, Rufus and his mother might be living in Ephesus together, but can

[26] Rom. 16. 5.

[27] Zahn, *op. cit.*, pp. 390–91.

we believe that these closest friends and relatives had all foregathered in Rome?

(5) If all of these good people were at Rome when Paul wrote this letter, what became of them later? Where were they during his imprisonment there? Did Paul not mention Aristarchus and Mark and Jesus Justus in his letter to the Colossians and then say, "These only are my fellow workers unto the kingdom of God"?[28] Later still did he not write to Timothy, "At my first defense no one took my part, but all forsook me,"[29] and again, "Only Luke is with me"?[30] If Paul had so many good friends at Rome before he visited it, surely some of them would be left there when he arrived in the city.

(6) Phœbe, sailing from Cenchreæ, more naturally would be going to Ephesus than to Rome. However, we are not sure that Phœbe sailed from Cenchreæ. She may have left that port and come to Corinth on her way across the isthmus to sail from the western port of Lechæum for Rome.

Notwithstanding all of these considerations, Lightfoot, Lietzmann, Gifford, Harnack, Sanday, Ramsay, Denney, Godet, Zahn, Peake, and others hold to the complete integrity of the epistle. They point out the facts (1) that after the mention of Aquila and Priscilla and Epænetus, whose names we already have discussed, not one of the other persons mentioned in these salutations can be shown to have any connection with Ephesus; and (2) some of these names, such as Urbanus, Rufus, Ampliatus, Julia, and Junia, are Latin names and would be more likely to be found in a church at Rome than at Ephesus, and both Narcissus and Aristobulus, whose households are mentioned, are friends of the Emperor Claudius and resident at Rome; and (3) fourteen of these names—Urbanus, Rufus, Ampliatus, Julia, Stachys, Apelles, Tryphæna, Tryphosa, Hermes,

[28] Col. 4. 10, 11.
[29] 2 Tim. 4. 16.
[30] 2 Tim. 4. 11.

Hermas, Patrobas, Philologus, Andronicus, and Nereus—are found in the sepulchral inscriptions on the Appian Way in the lists of persons connected with Cæsar's household and contemporary with Paul. Without better reasons, then, than have been furnished, conservative scholarship prefers to abide by the tradition that the sixteenth chapter belongs to the Epistle to the Romans.

CHAPTER IX

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

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THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

I. The Prison Trilogy of Pauline Epistles

The Pauline epistles fall into four groups not only in their chronological order but also in the character of their contents. We now have reached the third of these groups. The eschatological group comes first, First and Second Thessalonians. Some five years later the soteriological group was written, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans. After another interval of approximately five years another group of four epistles was written from the prison at Rome. They are the Christological epistles, or the epistles of Christ and his church.

We think that the order of their writing was as follows: Paul had occasion to send a runaway slave home to his master. He wrote the Epistle to Philemon to insure a kindly reception for the fugitive who had been converted in Rome. Tychicus accompanied Onesimus from Rome to Colossæ. Paul took advantage of the fact that he had these two messengers at hand and wrote a longer epistle to the church at Colossæ which Tychicus was commissioned to deliver. Then when the two epistles were completed he concluded to write a third epistle a little more elaborate, covering the same ground as the epistle to the Colossians in a more thorough and satisfactory manner, which Tychicus and Onesimus might carry with them to Ephesus first and which might serve as a circular letter for all the churches of Asia Minor. This, then, would seem to be the natural order in this trilogy; the little epistle to Philemon first, the longer epistle to the Colossians second, and the most elaborate epistle to the Ephesians third.

They were closely connected in thought. Colossians sets forth the dignity of Christ, the Head of the church. Ephesians presents the sublimity of the church, the Body of Christ. Philemon makes clear the value of each individual member of the Body of Christ, even if he be only a slave. Philippians, the fourth epistle of this prison group, was written probably a year or two later and upon an entirely different occasion, and therefore may be separated from this Prison Trilogy in our discussion.

II. The Persons Addressed

We take up the Epistle to Philemon first in order in this group and we consider next the persons to whom the epistle is addressed.

Paul had a long ministry in Ephesus and there were many converts. The influence of the new movement spread from the city into all the regions round about. The silversmiths were ready to say that not only in Ephesus but almost throughout all Asia Paul had persuaded the people to turn from idolatry to the worship of God and the discipleship of Jesus.[1] Among these people from the outlying districts who were attracted by Paul's preaching and were convinced by his teaching was a man named Philemon. Tradition says that he was resident in Colossæ.[2] We are told explicitly that Onesimus was at home in Colossæ.[3] Theodoret, a Syrian bishop of the fifth century, tells us that the house of Philemon at Colossæ still was standing in his day. We see no reason to question the tradition at this point.

This Philemon became closely associated with the Pauline mission. He may have been a partner with Paul in some business enterprise,[4] and we know that he was an intimate and trusted friend, and a faithful fellow worker in the

[1] Acts 19. 26.
[2] Compare Philem. 1, 2 with Col. 4. 17.
[3] Col. 4. 9. [4] Philem. 17.

Christian propagandism.[5] This epistle is addressed to him "and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in thy house." We do not know who Apphia and Archippus were, but since they are addressed along with Philemon in a letter concerning a private and domestic affair, it lies at hand to suppose that Apphia was Philemon's wife, and Archippus was their son, and that the church in the house of Philemon was the church in the home of the three. Then these three names would represent a Christian family in Colossæ, and probably the most important Christian family in the place, since the church assembled in their home. They probably were well-to-do and had a household of slaves to minister to them as any other family in their circumstances would.

III. Occasion of the Epistle

One of Philemon's slaves, Onesimus or "Profitable," ran away from him. It is altogether likely that he had committed some misdemeanor and he may have stolen some property.[6] In either case, as a deserter or as a thief, he was liable to be crucified if caught. In due time this runaway slave came to Rome. Paul was living in that city, and was occupying his own hired house.[7] We are told that he received all who went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Doubtless it was a very humble home, but Paul held cottage meetings in it and made it the Saint Paul's Cathedral of his day. Among those who came for counsel or instruction or help was Onesimus, the slave from Asia Minor. He must have heard much of Paul and of his work in Philemon's home, and he may have met Paul himself in some visit to Ephesus with his master. Anyway, he seeks Paul out, here in the great capital city. He may

[5] Philem. 1.

[6] Philem. 18.

[7] Acts 28. 30, 31.

have wished nothing more than to see a familiar face; or he may have been repentant and have come with a full confession upon his lips.

We can imagine how Paul would receive him, and how for Philemon's sake and for his own sake he would deal with him, gently and lovingly but firmly and honestly, until Onesimus was converted. Then when Onesimus shared with him all the joy of conscious salvation we can imagine what comfort Paul found in him and how much he would become attached to him. Onesimus became Paul's personal attendant, ministering to him not as a servant but as a brother beloved.[8] The hearts of these two men were knit together in Christian love.[9] Paul kept Onesimus with him until he was assured of the genuineness of his conversion and the steadfastness of his character; and then it was decided between them that the only right and proper thing would be for Onesimus to return to Philemon and try to repay him in faithful service for whatever loss he might have sustained through Onesimus before the latter's conversion. Paul writes this letter to Philemon to present the facts and to plead the cause of Onesimus. The slave returns with this letter in his hand.

IV. Description of the Epistle

The aim of Paul in writing this little letter was to secure forgiveness for Onesimus and to assure, if possible, his welcome in Christian love. It is a letter full of courtesy and grace. It begins with grace—"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."[10] It ends with grace, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."[11] It has been said that the Epistle to Philemon was a practical commentary on the injunction of the apostle in the Epistle to the Colossians,

[8] Philem. 16.
[9] Philem. 12.
[10] Philem. 3.
[11] Philem. 25.

"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt."[12] There is a half-playful, half-humorous tone behind the earnest and courteous appeal of the epistle. There is evident punning at one or two points. Paul says, "I beseech thee for my child, Onesimus, Helpful or Profitable, who once was unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and to me." And again, "Yea, brother, I would that thou wert an Onesimus to me, (*ἐγώ σου ὀναίμην*)."[13] Baur thinks that there is another play on words in the use of the two contrasting terms, *ἄχρηστον* and *εὔχρηστον* in verse 11. We find the pagans sometimes pronouncing Christus as Chrestus, so that this verse might suggest the reading, "He was once without Christ to thee, but now he is a good Christian to thee and to me."

This is the only strictly private letter written by Paul which has been preserved to us. His other epistles were written to churches or to groups of churches. The Pastoral Epistles were written to the heads of churches and concerning church regulation in large measure. This is a strictly personal and private letter. In it Paul might condescend to playfulness as he could not in his more public and official communications. Probably he wrote scores of these private letters, but all of the others have perished. This single surviving specimen shows that Paul was both a gentleman and a saint, and we may judge from it that if we had a complete collection of the lesser and private Pauline epistles, we would find that they would rank with those of Luther and of Rutherford as a distinct addition to the engaging devotional literature of the church.

A recent writer has said of the Epistle to Philemon: "If we sought to show the secret of Paul's success as a missionary, we should certainly turn to this brief epistle in preference almost to any other. For that secret did not lie so much in his masterly generalship of the churches, or in his

[12] Col. 4. 6. Sabatier, L'Apôtre Paul, p. 194.

[13] Philem. 10, 11, 20.

great ability in the statement and defense of the gospel, as in his devoted love to individual souls. It was by his affectionate personal interest that he undoubtedly obtained his singular hold upon men. Wherever he went hearts responded to this winsome attachment. The sunshine of his solicitude seemed to focus itself on each single life, and to make that life its peculiar care. Great as he is when panoplied in theological armor, 'sheathed with logic and bristling with arguments,' he is greater still as he lavishes himself in the personal ministry of love, and seeks to win his crown in the growing grace and peace of the souls whom he has brought into the kingdom of Christ. We might indeed have gathered so much from allusions in other epistles, but this one makes it particularly vivid, and, indeed, presents us with a quite unique picture of the apostle in all the charm of his intimate intercourse with his friends." [14]

Such, then, is the character of this epistle. It is a personal letter from the apostle to one of his converts concerning another one of his converts. They are all brothers beloved —the master and the slave, the aged apostle and the middle-aged business man and the youthful runaway thief. In the bonds of the Christian brotherhood they are united in fellowship and love. This letter has a familiar tone, a spice of wit, a pervading spirit of courtesy and grace, and an undercurrent of earnestness and serious concern which gives us some conception of the character of the apostle himself as it must have appeared in association with his intimate friends.

V. Comparison with Pliny

Grotius and others have called attention to the close parallel between the Epistle to Philemon and that written by the younger Pliny to his friend Sabinianus, pleading for the forgiveness of an offending freedman. This letter of Pliny has been justly praised as one of the most graceful

[14] Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

specimens of letter-writing which have come down from pagan antiquity. It was written in the generation next later than that of Paul, but it represents practically the same general condition of society. It runs as follows: "C. Plinius to his Sabinianus, greeting: Your freedman, with whom, as you had told me, you were vexed, came to me, and, flinging himself at my feet, clung to them as though they had been yours. He wept much, entreated much, yet at the same time left much unsaid, and, in short, convinced me that he was sincerely sorry. I believe that he is really reformed, because he is conscious of his delinquency. You are angry, I know; justly angry, that too I know; but gentleness is most praiseworthy exactly where anger is most justifiable. You loved the poor fellow, and I hope will love him again; meanwhile, it is enough to yield to intercession. Should he ever deserve it, you may be angry again, and all the more excusably by yielding now. Make some allowance for his youth, for his tears, for your own kindly disposition. Do not torture him, lest you torture yourself as well, for it is a torture to you when one of your kindly nature is angry. I fear you will think that I am not asking but forcing you if I join my prayers to his; I will, however, do so, and all the more fully and unreservedly in proportion to the sharpness and the severity with which I took him to task, sternly threatening that I would never say a word for him again. *That* I said to him because he needed to be well frightened; but I do not say it to you, for perhaps I shall say a word for him again, and again gain my point; provided only my request be such as it becomes me to ask and you to grant. Farewell!" [15]

The parallel is quite close between the letter of Pliny and that of Paul, and yet the contrast between the two is quite striking. Farrar has stated it clearly as follows: "That

[15] Ep., ix, 21.

exquisitely natural and beautifully written letter does credit both to Pliny's heart and to his head, and yet polished as it is in style, while Paul's is written with a sort of noble carelessness of expression, it stands for beauty and value far below the letter to Philemon. In the first place, it is for a young freedman who had been deeply beloved, and not for a runaway slave. In the next place, it is purely individual, and wholly wanting in the large divine principle which underlies the letter of Paul. And there are other marked differences. Paul has no doubt whatever about the future good conduct of Onesimus; but Pliny thinks that the young freedman may offend again. Pliny assumes that Sabinianus is and will be angry; Paul has no such fear about Philemon. Paul pleads on the broad ground of humanity redeemed in Christ; Pliny pleads the youth and tears of the freedman, and the affection which his master had once felt for him. Paul does not think it necessary to ask Philemon to spare punishment; Pliny has to beg his friend not to use torture. Paul has no reproaches for Onesimus; Pliny severely scolded his young suppliant, and told him—without meaning to keep his word—that he should never intercede for him again. The letter of Pliny is the letter of an excellent pagan; but the differences which separate the pagan from the Christian stand out in every line." [16]

Bishop Lightfoot quotes Pliny's letter and then says: "The younger Pliny is the noblest type of the true Roman gentleman, and this touching letter needs no words of praise. Yet, if purity of diction be excepted, there will hardly be any difference of opinion in awarding the palm to the Christian apostle. As an expression of simple dignity, of refined courtesy, of large sympathy, and of warm personal affection, the Epistle to Philemon stands unrivaled. And its pre-eminence is the more remarkable because in style it is excep-

[16] Farrar, Life of Paul, pp. 627–8.

tionally loose. It owes nothing to the graces of rhetoric; its effect is due solely to the spirit of the writer." [17]

VI. Other Estimates of the Epistle

1. Jerome said, "The letter is written with evangelical decorum." 2. Erasmus declared, "Cicero never wrote with greater elegance." 3. Bengel says, "A familiar and exceedingly courteous epistle concerning a private affair is inserted among the New Testament books, intended to afford a specimen of the highest wisdom as to how Christians should arrange civil affairs on loftier principles." 4. Bengel quotes Franke as saying, "The single Epistle to Philemon very far surpasses all the wisdom of the world." 5. Renan, with his usual enthusiasm, declares, "It is a true little *chef d'oeuvre* of the art of letter-writing." [18] 6. Another Frenchman, Sabatier, writes in a similar strain, "We have here only a few familiar lines, but so full of grace, of salt, of serious and trustful affection, that this short epistle gleams like a pearl of the most exquisite purity in the rich treasure of the New Testament." [19] 7. Ewald wrote, "Nowhere can the sensibility and warmth of a tender friendship blend more beautifully with the loftier feeling of a commanding spirit, a teacher and an apostle, than in this letter, at once so brief, and yet so surpassingly full and significant." [20] 8. Meyer is not prone to any extravagance of statement, but he says, "The aim of this epistle is pursued with so much Christian love and wisdom, with so great psychological tact, and, without sacrifice of the apostolic authority, in a manner so thoughtfully condescending, adroit, delicate, and irresistible, that the brief letter belongs, even as regards its Attic refinement and gracefulness, to the epistolary masterpieces of antiquity." [21] 9. Von Soden, in his History of Early Chris-

[17] Lightfoot, Colossians and Philemon, p. 317.
[18] L'Antéchrist, p. 96. [19] Sabatier, L'Apôtre Paul, p. 194.
[20] Ewald, Die Sendschreiben, etc., p. 458.
[21] Meyer, Commentary, p. 396.

tian Literature, joins in this chorus of praise. He says, "The whole epistle is a perfect jewel of the intimate epistolary style of a hero whom we otherwise meet with only on the heights of grand world-moving action. In its own peculiar way it convinces us of his surpassing greatness alike in mind and heart." [22] 10. Marcus Dods, A. T. Pierson, and others have called the Epistle to Philemon "the Idyl of the New Testament, combining beauty and brevity," [23] and they have compared it to the book of Ruth in the Old Testament. Like Ruth, it is "an idyl of domestic life," in which we escape from the storm of controversy.[24]

VII. Luther's Analogy

Luther said: "This epistle showeth a right noble lovely example of Christian love. Here we see how Paul layeth himself out for poor Onesimus, and with all his means pleadeth his cause with his master: and so setteth himself as if he were Onesimus, and had himself done wrong to Philemon. Even as Christ did for us with God the Father, thus also doth Paul for Onesimus with Philemon. . . . We are all his Onesimi, to my thinking." We all have belonged to God and we all have run away from him. We have been prodigals and thieves, for we have been wasting our Father's substance when we have taken our portion from him and have spent it in riotous living. There is no help for us, as far as the law is concerned. The law is against us and will exact from us the full penalty. Our only hope is in coming to Jesus and casting ourselves on his grace. God counts him his partner, and he will listen to his plea in our behalf. He offers to take all our liabilities upon himself and he asks that all our indebtedness may be put to his account. We come back to the Father not as runaway slaves or as thieves but as brothers beloved, and when we come back to the

[22] Von Soden, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

[23] Pierson, Keys to the Word, p. 129.

[24] Book by Book, p. 157.

Father's house our Elder Brother sees to it that we are received even as himself.

VIII. Some Interesting Questions

1. Why did Onesimus run away? Had Philemon been a hard master to serve before his conversion, and had Onesimus vowed in his heart at that time to take the first opportunity which offered to make his escape from the hateful and humiliating servitude? Or was Philemon always a good master and especially since his conversion had his household regime been such an easy one and the opportunities to take advantage of him and his good nature been so multiplied that it was simply a yielding to natural weakness or to natural depravity when Onesimus ran away? Or was it the very preaching of the Christian faith which had aroused in Onesimus a longing for freedom? According to Paul, Christ had come to set men free. The gospel of Paul was a gospel of liberty. It surely was possible that many a slave as he listened to the new preaching had felt that this was an evangel of personal emancipation as well as of spiritual equality. Was it some theft or some other form of personal delinquency the consequences of which Onesimus was afraid to face and was this the sufficient reason for his running away? There is room for manifold conjecture here, since none of these details are furnished us in the epistle.

2. What happened to Onesimus in the long journey from Colossæ to Rome? What adventures did he have on the way? Did he spend his ill-gotten gains in one long dissipation and then recover from his debauch to find himself penniless, and was he compelled to undergo a series of privations and hardships which nothing in his experience as a slave ever had equaled? Or did he hoard his stolen valuables and by their aid pay his way from city to city and from port to port till at last he came to Rome? Did he half starve in that city, and did he remember that in his master's home there always had been plenty and to spare,

and did he thus come to realize that freedom was not such a blessed boon as he had supposed? Had he himself been robbed and left half-dead by some roadside, and had some Christian found him and bound up his wounds, and was it this which brought him to Paul and to Christ? All life stories are interesting. There must have been a multitude of the most interesting adventures in the travels and experiences of this runaway slave. No one has chronicled them. We are free to imagine as many as we will.

3. What conversations took place between Paul and Onesimus before Onesimus was willing to go back to Philemon? Onesimus was useful to Paul in his ministering. He took the place of Philemon in his personal service. It would be a great loss to Paul if he went away; but it was a much more serious matter to Onesimus. Did he argue the question at length with Paul? Did he take the high ground that slavery was wrong as an institution, and that it was incompatible with Christianity, and that no Christian ought to be a slave? Did he suggest that it was through the providence of God that he had been enabled to escape, and that his life had been preserved in the long journey to Rome, and that he had been brought to Paul to hear and accept the good news of salvation? Did it seem to him like flying in the face of the divine will to go back again? Did he ask the apostle some embarrassing personal questions? Did he want to know what Paul meant by saying that all men were free in Christ and that there were to be no distinctions of bond and free in the Christian Church? What did Paul say to all of these things?

They must have talked it all out together; and they must have been equally and perfectly clear in their conclusion. "Of all the many conversations of which we would fain have the record, is there one which would exceed in interest the conversation between Paul and Onesimus in which this matter was first broached and discussed? To leave his newfound friend, to turn his face again toward Colossæ, to

travel back all that way in order to surrender the liberty he had gained, to face Philemon, to submit to any treatment to which an indignant master might expose an insurgent slave, to accept at the best a lifelong bondage, and at the worst a death by torture—to do this voluntarily and to do it because it was right, argues an extraordinary conviction both as to the reality of the divine command and as to the imperative obligation to obey."[25] Onesimus was taking some serious risks in returning. He must have been as sure as Paul that it was the only thing to do.

4. Was Onesimus forgiven when he reached Philemon's home again? Was he taken upon probation and kept under suspicion for a while? Or was he freed at once? We are disposed to think that this letter had a favorable reception and led to the reinstatement of Onesimus in his master's confidence. We think so for three reasons:

(1) We know that the letter of Pliny to Sabinianus led to the desired result, for Pliny wrote to Sabinianus later, saying: "You have done well in receiving back your freedman to your house and heart. This will give you pleasure, as it certainly gives me pleasure; first, because it shows me your self-control, and, secondly, because you esteem me sufficiently to yield to my authority, and make a concession to my entreaties." It may not be safe in this day to argue that if a man who is not a Christian is generous and forgiving, a man who is a professing Christian will be sure to be equally so; but we are disposed to think that it would be true as between Sabinianus and Philemon. The Christian man would not be likely to be outdone by the pagan.

(2) Philemon was a man who had faith in his fellows.[26] He had faith in the Lord Jesus and he had faith in the saints. He was not of a suspicious nature. He could be written down as one who loved his fellowmen. He had such a love for them that he was ready to bear all things and endure all

[25] Scott, Expositor VIII, ii, p. 333.

[26] Philem. 5.

things and hope all things concerning them. Paul may have had him in mind when he wrote that thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Who knows? He may have been at Paul's side when Paul penned that description of the possible incarnation of Christian love. He was a man who had such faith in the regenerating power in the gospel of his Christ that he was ready to believe that the vilest sinner could become the greatest saint. He had faith in the saints, and Paul appeals to that faith in behalf of Onesimus. He says: "Let your love for Jesus be tested by your love for Onesimus. Let your faith in Jesus be measured by your faith in Onesimus. He is one of the saints. Receive him now as you would receive me." [27] We know with what welcome and with what unstinted hospitality Philemon would welcome Paul into his home. We are disposed to think that Onesimus was received with joy and restored to confidence in answer to Paul's appeal.

(3) There is a personal note in this epistle which we feel sure would prevail. It is Paul the aged who makes this request.[28] Paul probably was about fifty-five years old when he wrote himself down as an aged man. We would not call that very old to-day, but Paul was a man visited with frequent infirmity, and he had undergone unparalleled hardships in preaching the gospel. He may have aged rapidly and he may have felt very infirm at this time, and he may have had the appearance of a much older man. Anyway, he feels warranted in making this appeal in the name of Paul the aged one. Then he reminds Philemon that he is a prisoner while he writes.[28] He has lost his liberty for the sake of the gospel. How he would like to be free! What he would ask of Nero for himself he asks of Philemon in behalf of Onesimus. Surely, the plea of the prisoner of Christ Jesus[29] will be heard for the slave of

[27] Philem. 17.
[28] Philem. 9.
[29] Philem. 1.

Philemon. Then he offers to go security for the good behavior of Onesimus or for the repayment of his debt. Could Philemon refuse this offer from Paul without showing a lack of confidence in Paul himself?

Dean Plumptre thinks that the partnership which Paul claims in verse 17 is a business partnership. It is not merely Christian brotherhood and a sharing in the inheritance of the divine kingdom and a common interest in the graces and the blessings which flowed out of it, but he thinks that, as the sons of Zebedee were partners on the Sea of Galilee with the sons of John, so, since the selfsame word is used here as in Luke 5. 10, Paul and Philemon were partners at some period of Paul's work in Asia, at Ephesus or elsewhere. He suggests that Philemon may have taken the place in the tentmaking firm which had been occupied by Aquila and Priscilla. Then he considers that the statement in verse 18 is a straightforward business proposition—"If you have sustained any loss through Onesimus, debit my account with the whole amount." And he adds, "If, as was in the nature of the case probable, we think of Paul as dictating the letter to Onesimus, who was to deliver it, we can picture to ourselves the impression which this generous offer would make on the amanuensis: how there would be a moment's pause, how the apostle would seize the reed pen, which had been before in the hand of the scribe, and, in the large ungainly characters by which his signature was identified, add his autograph promise, and so turn the letter into a bond: I Paul write it with my own hand; I will repay." [30]

This may be possible, but there are those who will feel that much of the beauty and the poetry of the situation is lost if Paul's plea descends at this point to the plain prose of a business transaction; and they will rejoice to see that Paul immediately reminds Philemon that the much greater debt which Philemon owes to him—the debt of his own sal-

[30] Expositor, I, i, p. 265.

vation, the debt of his own triumphant better self, the debt of his Christian life—will more than balance the debit-sheet.[31] There is this fourfold personal appeal. "(*a*) I am Paul the aged; I will not make many more requests from you before I die; grant me this present plea. (*b*) I am Paul the prisoner of Christ Jesus; it is a fettered hand which I stretch forth in my pleading; grant this relief to the present suffering I undergo for the cause. (*c*) I will become security for Onesimus; if he has wronged thee, I will repay it; and I will stand surety that he will not wrong thee again. (*d*) May I remind you that you are very much in my debt, and that the granting of this request will only tend toward the evening up of our account?" This fourfold plea from the personal standpoint surely would reach Philemon's heart, if he himself were not by natural disposition or by Christian grace inclined to the side of mercy. We think it altogether probable, therefore, that the plea of Paul in this epistle was a successful one.

IX. Genuineness of the Epistle

Since this is a purely personal and private letter, and since the occasion of it did not demand any particular display of apostolic and divine inspiration, and since its contents did not include anything of especial theological or ecclesiastical importance, we might have expected that it would have been lost to sight in very early days and that few or no witnesses to its genuineness would have been preserved. It surely is a most remarkable fact that, notwithstanding its character, this little fugitive epistle should have found a place in all the ancient canons and in all the early versions. Marcion the heretic, who formed the first New Testament canon, cut out many of the books we have in the canon of to-day, but he included the Epistle to Philemon. The Muratorian fragment containing the oldest orthodox canonical list mentions this epistle. It was found in the

[31] Philem. 19.

oldest version in the West, the Itala, and in the oldest version in the East, the Peshito. Origen, the greatest scholar of the East, quoted it without hesitation. Jerome, the greatest scholar in the West, defended it from those who thought that it had nothing which tended to edification. The very things which, according to Jerome, caused some to hesitate about putting it into the canon are the things which prove the genuineness of the epistle. There has been no serious questioning of its Pauline origin in modern times.

CHAPTER X

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

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THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

I. Colossæ and Its Companion Cities

About one hundred miles inland from Ephesus, in the little valley of the Lycus, three cities stood. 1. The largest of them was Laodicea. The name was a common one in Asia Minor, and Laodicea on the Lycus, as it was called to distinguish it from other cities with this name, had received its title from Antiochus Theos, who named it after his wife, about the middle of the third century B. C. In New Testament times it was a wealthy and magnificent city. It was rich and had need of nothing. When it was devastated by an earthquake a few years later than the date of Paul's epistle to it Tacitus tells us that it proudly refused any assistance from the state and unaided rebuilt itself from its ruins, rising like a Phœnix from its dust. Strabo tells us that one of its citizens, Polemo, became a king and a father of kings; and that another public-spirited capitalist, Hiero, left all his fortune to the people and adorned the city with costly gifts.

Laodicea was a manufacturing and commercial center, famous for its carpets and cloths made from a glossy black wool unrivaled in the markets of that day. A medical school was there whose physicians, Ramsay tells us, were noted for their treatment of the diseases of the eye. Laodicea was addressed in one of the Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia, found in the beginning chapters of the Apocalypse; and it would seem that the atmosphere of ease and luxury with which the Christian church there was surrounded had had its effect upon the spiritual life of the community, and

that it was characterized by lukewarmness and self-satisfaction; and every phrase of the exhortation found in the Apocalypse is seen to have a local application and a particular pertinency in view of the facts we now have stated. Its wealth and self-sufficiency, its black cloths and its eyesalves are all suggested when the Apocalyptist writes, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eyesalve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see." [1]

Laodicea had a stream on either side of it, and the river Lycus running before it, while behind it rose Mount Cadmus, seven thousand feet high, covered with eternal snow. The Lycus was a strange river. It was a tributary of the Maeander, and its waters were strongly impregnated with carbonate of lime, so that along its whole course there were calcareous deposits and all the strange formations and fantastic effects which such waters produce. Natural bridges formed themselves above it and at one place the river disappeared from sight and flowed, as Herodotus declared, for five stadia underground.

2. Hierapolis was only a few miles distant from Laodicea on the northern side of the river. It was a city set on a hill. Beautiful for situation, on a broad terrace with an outlook to the south and the east and the west, it was famed for the purity of its air and the healthfulness of its waters and the natural beauties on every side. The cliff on which it stood was one of the natural wonders of the ancient world. Lightfoot says: "It is at Hierapolis that the remarkable physical features which distinguish the valley of the Lycus

[1] Rev. 3. 17, 18.

display themselves in the fullest perfection. Over the steep cliffs which support the plateau of the city, tumble cascades of pure white stone, the deposit of calcareous matter from the streams which, after traversing this upper level, are precipitated over the ledge into the plain beneath and assume the most fantastic shapes in their descent. At one time overhanging in cornices fringed with stalactites, at another hollowed out into basins or broken up with ridges, they mark the site of the city at a distance, glistening on the mountain-side like foaming cataracts frozen in the fall." [2] Across the valley this cliff shone like marble with dazzling whiteness, and closer at hand it seemed to be alive and in motion as the waters trickling over it were reflected in their shimmering opalescence. An inscription, still legible on the site of Hierapolis, thus apostrophizes the famous city,

> Hail, fairest soil in all broad Asia's realm;
> Hail, golden city, nymph divine, bedeck'd
> With flowing rills, thy jewels.

Hierapolis was a pleasure resort and a health resort, a holy city and a healing city, with magnificent temples and tombs. It was frequented by the wealthy. It claimed to cure all diseases. It was a center of worship. It was called the Sacred City; and a lame slave was growing into manhood in it when the gospel of Christ first was preached there, whose fame would increase that of the famous city as it came to be known as the birthplace of Epictetus, the greatest of all the heathen moralists, the one whose lofty spirit and exalted ethics most nearly approach that of Christianity itself. Tradition said that the evangelist Philip and his daughters made their home in Hierapolis for a considerable period, and Epictetus may have come into contact with them there. Papias was bishop of the Christian Church in Hierapolis in the second century. The Lycus river still flows through the valley; but Laodicea is only a pile of ruins to-

[2] Lightfoot, Colossians, p. 10.

day. The famous cliff of Hierapolis still stands in its unique beauty, but Hierapolis long has ceased to be an abode of men.

3. Colossæ never had either the population or the fame of these other cities. It is doubtful if it deserved to be called a city at this time. It was situated farther to the east, some ten or eleven miles up the valley from Laodicea and thirteen miles from Hierapolis. It seems to have been simply a country village, where the people had little or nothing to do but to talk and to speculate and to develop unprofitable and heretical doctrines. It surely is the least important place to which any of Paul's letters were written. The valley of the Lycus was about forty miles in length. Hierapolis was some six miles north of Laodicea. Colossæ was only ten miles east of Laodicea. An itinerant preacher easily could visit the three cities in a single day. It is noteworthy that the Epistle to the Colossians is written, not to the metropolis of the valley and not to the sacred city, but to the little village beyond them, where some of Paul's personal friends happened to be living.

II. The Population of the Lycus Valley

The valley lay in the midst of a mountainous and volcanic region, and it was visited again and again with earthquakes. The people were like their environment, volcanic in nature and given to upheavals. In the second century B. C. the population was seething with revolution and Antiochus the Great imported two thousand families of Jews from Babylon and settled them in Lydia and Phrygia in the hope that they would introduce and maintain an element of stability. Cybele, the great mother of the gods, had the principal seat of her worship at Hierapolis; and the whole district was filled with her fanatical and fantastic worshipers. Her ritual was of the wildest and most excitable sort, and the people were used to mysteries and mummeries, extravagant orgies, and many gross superstitions. The paganism of this

region was notoriously cruel, excitable, and impure. The extravagances of Montanism found a congenial home here in the second century. The Council of Laodicea forbade the worship of angels in the Christian churches in this region in the fourth century. In the Middle Ages we hear that the archangel Michael was worshiped in this vicinity. The people still were superstitious and unstable.

III. Paul and the Churches of the Lycus Valley

Paul never had visited this valley. He writes to the Christians of Colossæ and of Laodicea as to those who had not seen his face in the flesh.[3] The Epistle to the Colossians and the Epistle to the Romans are the two Pauline epistles addressed to churches which Paul himself had not directly founded. Indirectly he may have been the founder of both. Surely, a large percentage of the membership at Rome had been recruited from the converts made in the Pauline mission field, and the church at Colossæ seems to have been under the direction of a Pauline convert, whose name was Epaphras. Paul seems to recognize him as his personal representative, for he says that Epaphras was a faithful minister of Christ on his behalf.[4] Epaphras was an itinerant preacher who traveled a circuit, for Paul says that he labored much for his own people at Colossæ and also for those at Laodicea and for those in Hierapolis.[5] There were close political and commercial relations between Ephesus and the cities of the Lycus valley, and Epaphras probably had met Paul at Ephesus just as Philemon had, and these two men had carried the new gospel back to Colossæ, and Philemon had opened his home for the public services of the Christian community formed there, and Epaphras had become their official evangelist and leader.

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[3] Col. 2. 1.
[4] Col. 1. 7.
[5] Col. 4. 12, 13.

Now that Paul was in prison at Rome, all responsibility for the administration of the church rested upon the heart of Epaphras, and certain developments had taken place which were puzzling to him, and he seems to have decided finally that it would be worth while to make the long journey to Rome that he might lay the whole case before Paul and ask for his advice. Paul heard his story and wrote this epistle to correct the errors in conduct and faith which had sprung up in the Colossian church; for if he himself had not founded it, he felt indirectly responsible for it, since it had been founded by his converts. The exact date of the writing of the epistle we do not know; but it must have been some time after the beginning of the Roman imprisonment. Epaphras must have heard that Paul was accessible to his friends, and we must reckon the time needed for his journey after that. Onesimus had been converted and had had time to prove the genuineness of his experience and his serviceableness to Paul after his conversion. We would be inclined, therefore, to think that it must have been about the middle of that Roman imprisonment of two years mentioned in Acts 28. 30 that the prison trilogy of epistles was written, at some time in the years A. D. 62 or 63.

IV. The Colossian Heresies

At Hierapolis there were healing springs the fame of whose curative powers brought invalids from far and wide. In the near neighborhood at the base of the hills, there was also a spring the fumes from which killed both men and beasts. To the Christians it seemed like the smoking mouth of hell. The waters of all this district were boiling and seething, and filled with many strange ingredients. Some of the Christian religion at Colossæ was beginning to exhibit something of the same phenomena. Seemingly contradictory elements were held in solution. The pure water of the river of life flowing from the throne and for the healing of the nations was being polluted by some foul admixtures

from the subterranean and volcanic depths of the pit. It was natural in such environment. We do not know the exact sources from which these polluting streams had come. We know that in this neighborhood all sorts of faiths and fanaticisms were constantly arising and struggling with each other in strange admixtures of antagonism and affinity. What we know of the errors in the Colossian church we gather from allusions in Paul's epistle, and these allusions would lead us to think that they were Essenic, Theosophic, and Gnostic. They were partly Jewish and partly heathen and partly Oriental.

Dean Mansel defines the incipient Gnosticism at Colossæ as follows: "First, it pretended, under the plausible name of philosophy, to be in possession of a higher knowledge of spiritual things than could be obtained through the simple preaching of the gospel. Secondly, it adopted the common tenet of all the Gnostic sects, that of a distinction between the supreme God and the Demiurgos, or creator of the world. Thirdly, by virtue of its pretended insight into the spiritual world, it taught a theory of its own concerning the various orders of the angels and the worship to be paid to them. And, fourthly, in connection with these theories, it enjoined and adopted the practice of a rigid asceticism, extending and exaggerating the ceremonial prohibitions of the Jewish law, and probably connecting them with the philosophical theory concerning the evil nature of matter." [6] We see at once that these errors were partly speculative and partly practical. They affected both conduct and creed. Theological and philosophical presuppositions bore their legitimate fruit in asceticism and ritualism and intellectual exclusiveness and pride. Oriental mysticism, Manichean dualism, Essenic asceticism, Jewish ritualism, Gnostic affectation of humility with an abundance of pride all seem to have been striving for a footing inside the Christian Church.

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[6] Mansel, Gnostic Heresies, p. 53.

This epistle is written to show their utter incompatibility with the Christian faith.

V. Paul's Answers to These Heresies

The Epistle to the Colossians is a model of wisdom in the method of dealing with such matters. Paul meets these errors, "not by indignant controversy, for as yet they were only undeveloped; nor by personal authority, for these Christians were not his converts; but by the noblest of all forms of controversy, which is the pure presentation of counter truths. To a cumbrous ritualism he opposes a spiritual service; to inflating speculations a sublime reality; to hampering ordinances a manly self-discipline; to esoteric exclusiveness a universal gospel; to theological cliques an equal brotherhood; to barren systems a new life, a new impulse, a religion of the heart."[7] There really is only one answer in this epistle to all the Colossian errors, and that answer is "Christ!" Godet says, "The central idea of the Epistle to the Colossians is the perfect sufficiency of Christ for our salvation."[8]

Notice how this fact appears in the limitless aspiration in Paul's prayers for the Colossians.[9] He asks that they may be *filled* with the knowledge of God's will in *all* spiritual wisdom and understanding, to walk worthily of the Lord unto *all* pleasing, bearing fruit in *every* good work, and *increasing* in the knowledge of God. Paul is not straitened within himself in these petitions. There is nothing modest in these requests. He asks for *all* wisdom and *all* pleasing and *every* good work, and then and thus for an *increase* in the knowledge of God. How does he dare to make such sweeping demands of God for them and of them for God? Because it is their privilege, he says, to be strengthened with *all power*—not a little power, just

[7] Farrar, Messages of the Books, p. 312.
[8] Godet, Studies on the Epistles, p. 185.
[9] Col. 1. 9–11.

enough to enable them to be half-wise and half-pleasing and half-fruitful and half-obedient; but *all* power that they may need, *all* power there is in God. Their sufficiency is to be in him. He is to make them sufficient, unto their portion of the inheritance of the saints in light.[10] The only limit to the power at their command is the might of the glory of the Unlimited and the Almighty One. They were to be strengthened with Omnipotence unto all patience and long-suffering with joy.[11] All wisdom and all pleasing and all fruitfulness and all patience and all long-suffering and all joy were made possible because they were made powerful with *all power*, *ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει δυναμούμενοι*.

Paul seems to be fond of that word "all" when he comes to the description of the majesty of his Christ and the magnitude of his work for the universe. See how the word recurs in 1. 15-20. There is no better example of the Pauline universalism than these sentences afford. Christ is the firstborn of *all* creation. He is before *all* things. In him and through him and unto him *all* things have been created. In him *all* things consist. There is no limitation possible here. Christ is the creator and sustainer of *all* things, without exception. This is not poetry. It is the statement of the actual fact. Paul goes on to say that Christ is the Head of the church, the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in *all* things he might have the preeminence; for it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should *all* the fullness dwell. No one thinks of suggesting any limitation here. Paul posits *all* preeminence for his Christ. He is the universal Creator; he is the universal Providence; he has universal preeminence.

Then Paul goes on at once to say that it was the Father's good pleasure through Christ to reconcile *all* things unto himself, whether things upon the earth or things in heaven. Who will dare to file any exception here? Who will dare to

[10] Col. 1. 12, *τῷ ἱκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς*.

[11] Col. 1. 11.

say that the unlimited "all," seven times repeated in this passage, suddenly becomes a limited "all" in the eighth and final occurrence of it? Has Paul been working up to an anticlimax all this time? Have his universals suddenly shrunk so as to cover only the handful of the elect or the small minority of believers in the present day? Paul would laugh to scorn any such suggestion. What he says and what he believes is that the reconciling power of Christ reaches as far as his creative power has gone. It is no poetry. It is the statement of the fact. It is a climax of thought, representing the climax of Paul's faith. The universe was created by Christ; the universe is upheld by Christ; the universe has been reconciled through Christ. "Through him *all* things were reconciled, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens."

Here is a gospel for all creation under heaven. Here is a gospel for the universe. R. H. Charles sums up his discussion of the Pauline eschatology as follows: "Since all things, in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, were created by Christ (Col. 1. 16), and, according to the same passage, were to find their consummation in him, they must, therefore, come within the sphere of his mediatorial activity; they must ultimately be summed up in Christ as their Head (Eph. 1. 10). Hence, since in the world of spiritual beings some have sinned or apostatized, they too must share in the atonement of the cross of Christ, and so obtain reconciliation (Col. 1. 19, 20), and, having been reconciled, they should join in the universal worship of the Son (Phil. 2. 10). Since all things must be reconciled and summed up in Christ, there can be no room finally in the universe for a wicked being, whether human or angelic." [12]

The all-sufficiency of Christ! that is Paul's gospel. He is able to meet the needs of any man. He is able to meet the

[12] Charles, Eschatology, pp. 404, 405.

needs of the universe. "We proclaim this Christ," says Paul, "admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ." [13] We note the three occurrences of the phrase "every man." At this point, again, there is no limitation to Paul's aspiration. He has a gospel for *every man,* a gospel able to make every man perfect in Christ. It is one of the greatest sayings in the epistles. Paul indicates in it the Message of his gospel, the Methods of his ministry, and the Mark at which he aimed; the Proclamation and the Practice and the Purpose of his preaching; the Person he presented, his threefold Plan of procedure, and the predetermined Purport of his effort.

He proclaimed "Christ," not any system of theology, not any theory of salvation, but primarily and preeminently "Christ." His message was concerning a person first of all. Creeds might come in their due order; but his first business was to present the facts concerning the personal Christ. He preached and he admonished and he taught. In this threefold method the claims of Christ were presented. Paul's ministry was one of preaching and exhortation and education. To be that it had to be both public and private; and it aimed at perfection. He wished to present every man "perfect in Christ." It was no small task which he had undertaken in the name of his Lord. Paul has told these Colossians in the preceding context that Jesus died "to present you holy and without blemish and unreprovable before him." [14] Paul tells the Colossians now that his aim and work is like that of his Master, "to present every man perfect in Christ."

What is it to be perfect in Christ? It is to be "holy and without blemish and unreproveable before him." First of all, it is to be whole, not crippled, not injured, complete in every part and in full possession of all one's powers. Then,

[13] Col. 1. 28.

[14] Col 1. 22.

it is to be without blemish, sound throughout, with no corruption at any spot. Finally, it is to have reached the end set before man in his creation, it is to be what God would have man to be—thoroughly devoted and thoroughly serviceable to him, well-pleasing and unreproved. When every minister and every missionary and every Christian gets this Pauline vision of the task set before us and of the glorious goal promised and guaranteed in our Christ for every man and for the race, we may expect some measure of the renewal of the Pauline energy and zeal in our evangelism and some measure of the Pauline success.

"The Christian aim, for which the preaching of Christ supplies ample power, is to make the whole race possess, in fullest development, the whole circle of possible human excellences." [15] Such language would seem extravagant were it not that the New Testament is full of such statements, and were it not that the whole of its revelation is based upon the fact that Christ is all-sufficient for all such things. Paul believed it and in that belief we find the explanation of the ceaseless sacrifice of his career. Having made it the aim of his ministry to present every man perfect in Christ, he had doomed himself to more than penal labor. He had pledged himself to a work which would demand all of his energies as long as he lived. If he had not believed that the reward would be worth the sacrifice, his life would have been a hard one indeed. He believed that the harvest would be worth more than its weight in gold. Christ all-sufficient! every man perfect! that was a gospel worth preaching. To proclaim that gospel was worth a man's life, either in sacrifice or in martyrdom.

Christ all-sufficient! that was the one answer Paul had to make to all these errorists.

Let us see now that this is true, as we look at the epistle in more detail.

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[15] Maclaren, Commentary on Colossians, p. 145.

1. Were there those who were positing a long series of emanations between mankind and the Deity? In professed humility were they preaching that only through an elaborate system of mediation could man approach the Most High? Were they teaching the existence of multiplied spiritual hierarchies, many ranks and orders of angels coming between the soul and God? Paul answers to all of this theosophical speculation: "There is one mediator, Christ! He is the absolute and universal mediator. We have no need of any other mediators beyond him. He created the universe.[16] It is not the work of any Demiurge; it is the work of Christ. He upholds and maintains the universe.[17] He has no need of any assistants in that field. He is the Head of the church and the one all-sufficient Mediator there.[18] He alone reconciles God and man. He alone reconciles God and all things.[19] We need not fear the Majesty of the Most High as long as we have the Mediator, Christ. He hath blotted out the bond written in ordinances which was against us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross." [20]

This hath he done, and shall we not adore him?
  This shall he do, and can we still despair?
Come let us quickly fling ourselves before him,
  Cast at his feet the burthen of our care.

Flash from our eyes the glow of our thanksgiving,
  Glad and regretful, confident and calm,
Then thro' all life and what is after living
  Thrill to the tireless music of a psalm.

Yea thro' life, death, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning
  He shall suffice me, for he hath sufficed:
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
  Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.[21]

Martin Luther caught the very spirit of Paul when he said

[16] Col. 1. 16.
[17] Col. 1. 17.
[18] Col. 1. 18.
[19] Col. 1. 20.
[20] Col. 2. 14.
[21] Myers, Saint Paul, pp. 52, 53.

in his Table Talk, "See to it that thou know no God, and pay homage to no God, except the Man Christ Jesus; but lay hold of him alone, and continue hanging with thy whole heart upon him, and let all thoughts and speculations about the Majesty go their way. In this business look straight at the Man alone, who presents himself to us as Mediator, and says, 'Come to me all ye that are weary and heavy laden.'" The one sufficient answer to all the Gnostic emanations and multiplied mediators is, that we have one sufficient Mediator, Christ.

2. Were there those who were saying that matter was inherently evil and that the body therefore was vile? The one sufficient answer to all such Manichean dualism was the incarnation of Christ. The body as such could not be vile because Christ was incarnate. In the body of his flesh he wrought our reconciliation and made it possible for us to be holy and without blemish and unreprovable before him in faith.[22] In the body of his flesh all matter was redeemed, and even the body of our humiliation is no longer a vile body but a body which is to be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able to subject all things to himself.[23] Incipient Gnosticism and full-fledged Manicheanism alike are fully answered in Christ.

3. Were there those who were declaring the necessity of ascetic practices, as a means to the mortification of the flesh? Holiness is not to be attained by hard discipline. The flesh is not crucified by abstinence from certain kinds of food or by scourgings and ill treatment. Any harsh treatment of his own body is consistent with unrestrained selfishness in the devotee. Exceptional saintliness seldom is found among the ascetics, and when it is found in any one of them it is the fruit of the crucifixion of the spirit and not of the castigation of the flesh. A man may wear a hairshirt and be a hypocrite. A man may scourge his back every

[22] Col. 1. 22.

[23] Phil. 3. 21.

day and hide seven devils in his heart all the time. A man's food does not determine his character. If it is wholesome, it is good for his physical life, and the physical life may have its influence upon the mental and the spiritual life; but of itself neither the taking of food nor the abstinence from food will insure sainthood. Character does not depend upon matter. It does not matter what a man eats or drinks if he eat and drink to the glory of God. Asceticism never saves.

"It is easier to travel the whole distance from Cape Comorin to the shrine of Juggernaut, measuring every foot of it by the body laid prostrate in the dust, than to surrender the heart to the love of God. . . . It is strange, and yet not strange, that people should think that, somehow or other, they recommend themselves to God by making themselves uncomfortable, but so it is that religion presents itself to many minds mainly as a system of restrictions and injunctions which forbids the agreeable and commands the unpleasant. So does our poor human nature vulgarize and travesty Christ's solemn command to deny ourselves and take up our cross after him." [24] Paul says that these things are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh.[25] There is only one man who is assured of constant victory over the world and the flesh and the devil and that is the man who has put away all that is evil and has put on all that is good, the one who has become a new man in Christ Jesus, the one to whom Christ is all in all,[26] the one in whose heart the peace of Christ has come to rule,[27] the one in whose heart and mind the word of Christ dwells richly,[28] the one who does all in word and deed in the name of the Lord Jesus.[29] This man will be perfect, and he will have perfect victory over his own body, because as an individual member of the church which is the body of Christ he will give Christ

[24] Maclaren, *op. cit.*, p. 254.
[25] Col. 2. 23.
[26] Col. 2. 5–11.
[27] Col. 3. 15.
[28] Col. 3. 16.
[29] Col. 3. 17.

the preeminence in all things.[30] This is Paul's answer to the ascetics: "Christ is sufficient to save. Severity to the body has no value. The only sufficient power to live the Christian life is to be found in Christ."

4. Were there those who were advocating an elaborate ritual, the observance of meats and drinks and feast days and new moons and the Sabbath day? These are all elements and rudiments and the ordinances of men. The higher life cannot be dependent upon such things. Christians are not made by ceremonies. Rites do not make righteous. They may have a show of wisdom.[31] They may claim that they are aids to the spiritual life; they may set out to help the soul in its approach to God; they may claim to be symbols of great realities; they may gratify the senses; they may satisfy the æsthetic taste. Spiritual worship is superior to all of these things. The man who has died with Christ is no longer subject to them. The man who has risen with Christ has set his mind on things above them.[32] It is too true, as all history goes to show, that "enlisting the senses as the allies of the spirit in worship is risky work. They are very apt to fight for their own hand when they once begin, and the history of all symbolic and ceremonial worship shows that the experiment is much more likely to end in sensualizing religion than in spiritualizing sense. . . . All ceremonial is in danger of becoming opaque instead of transparent, as it was meant to be, and of detaining mind and eye instead of letting them pass on and up to God. Stained glass is lovely, and white windows are barnlike and starved and bare; but perhaps, if the object is to get light and to see the sun, these solemn purples and glowing yellows are rather in the way. . . . Anyway, Paul's great principle here is that a Christianity making much of forms and ceremonies is a distinct retrogression and descent. You are men

[30] Col. 1. 18.
[31] Col. 2. 23.
[32] Col. 3. 2.

in Christ; do not go back to the picture book A B C of symbol and ceremony, which was fit for babes. You have been brought into the inner sanctuary of worship in spirit; do not decline to the beggarly elements of outward form." [33]

What is the safeguard against all this? It is the life in Christ. It is Christ in the life of the believer. Walk in him, and there will be a new consciousness of superiority to all sensual appeals in rites and ceremonies. Here were two foes to the Christianity in Colossæ. One was speculative and the other practical. One appealed to the pride of intellect and the other to the pleasure of the senses. One would resolve Christianity into theological speculations and capture the Oriental philosophies; the other would resolve Christianity into pageants and performances and capture with it the plain peoples who delighted in parade and show. To the cultured theosophists, on the one hand, and to the ascetics and the ritualists, on the other hand, Paul has the one answer to make: "Christ relieves us of all need of your paltry panaceas. In Christ there is the Pleroma of the Godhead,[34] and in Christ we have the Pleroma of power and of purity and of peace and of salvation.[35] Christ is all and in all,[36] and in Christ we are superior to all pagan philosophizing and all Essenic asceticism and all Jewish or pagan ritualism in worship."

5. Evidently, all of the tendencies we have been considering would lead directly to esoteric circles in the Christian Church and to the fostering of a spiritual pride and an inclination to exclusiveness on the part of those who belonged to them. The theosophists would substitute for the old distinctions of race a new distinction of intellectual aristocracy. They would form a Brahman caste in the Christian Church. The ascetics and the ritualists probably would not deny that those who did not follow them into their extremes of discipline and ceremony were Christians,

[33] Maclaren, *op. cit.*, pp. 192–3.
[34] Col. 2. 9.
[35] Col. 2. 10.
[36] Col. 3. 11.

but they surely would hold that they were Christians of an inferior sort. The very fact that they themselves submitted to these things showed their belief that there was a superior virtue in them. Now, against all of this tendency to the formation of a spiritual aristocracy in the Christian Church Paul sets forth in this epistle the great and inevitable fact of a spiritual democracy in Christ. He says: "We proclaim Christ, admonishing every man (not any little group of cultured souls alone), and teaching every man (not any esoteric circles of congenial spirits alone), in all wisdom (which is to be shared by all alike and not to be the property of any intellectual aristocracy alone), that we may present every man perfect in Christ[37] (so that the Christian Church will be the long sought and only possible universal democracy). In this Christian Church there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all and in all."[38]

Many of the commentators think that the word τέλειον, perfect, in this passage means "fully initiated." It is a word used in the Greek mysteries, and it was applied to those who had passed through all the lower stages and had been admitted to the innermost circle of the enlightened. Only a favored few attained to this final degree, and they were an esoteric aristocracy. Most of their disciples were kept in stages of imperfect development. It is suggested that Paul here is making a protest against all this exclusiveness and mystery, and he says that in the Christian faith it is his aim to admonish every man and to teach every man in all wisdom, that he might present every man fully initiated in Christ. It may be that the Christian democracy in which every man was perfect in his own measure and degree here is set in contrast with the select circles of the mystagogues, and it may not. We are certain, however, of the moral and spiritual meaning which Paul

[37] Col. 1. 28.

[38] Col. 3. 11.

always put into these terms in his other epistles. The Colossians were to be perfect in Christ.[39] They were to walk in Christ.[40] They were to be complete in Christ,[41] "pleromated, made full" in him. The Pleroma which dwelt in him was to dwell in them, and they were to dwell in Christ.

It is very noticeable that in the address in 1. 2 the Colossians are located twice. They are said to be the saints and faithful brethren, ἐν Κολοσσαῖς, in Colossæ, and in the same sentence they are said to be the saints and faithful brethren, ἐν Χριστῷ, in Christ. They were in Colossæ and they were in Christ. They were in Christ just as surely as they were in Colossæ. They had their residence in Colossæ and they walked about in Colossæ in the pursuit of their business day by day; and they had received Jesus Christ as their Lord, and they walked in him as they went about their business day by day. Colossæ was not a very congenial environment. The heathenism round about them would not be sympathetic with the adherents of the new faith. Day by day they would need to face much that was disagreeable and unpleasant in all their relationships with Colossæ; but day by day they would have much comfort and all needed strengthening in Christ. Matthew Arnold wrote about a minister in the slums of the East End of London:

'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,
And the pale weaver, through his windows seen
In Spitalfields, look'd thrice dispirited.

I met a preacher there I knew, and said;
"Ill and o'erworked how fare you in this scene?"—
"Bravely!" said he; "for I of late have been
Much cheer'd with thoughts of Christ, the living bread."

That has something of the spirit of Paul in the use of this, his characteristic phrase.

[39] Col. 1. 28. [40] Col. 2. 6. [41] Col. 2. 10.

It has been said that all of Paul's theology could be summed up in those two words, "In Christ." In the first sentence in the companion Epistle to the Ephesians Paul says that Christians have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places *in Christ*,[42] that God chose us *in Christ* before the foundation of the world,[43] that the grace of God is freely bestowed upon us *in Christ*,[44] that *in Christ* we have our redemption,[45] that the good pleasure of God was purposed *in Christ*,[46] that that good pleasure was to sum up all things *in Christ*,[47] that *in Christ* we were made a heritage,[48] that *in Christ* we have hoped,[49] and that *in Christ* we were sealed with the Spirit of promise.[50] It is all in Christ. Eleven times the phrases are repeated in that one sentence. It does seem that all of the Pauline theology might be found in those two words. Paul thinks that we owe everything to Christ, and that we have everything *in Christ*. The one answer to all these wrong theories and practices in Colossæ is, Christ!

VI. The Christological Epistle

This is preeminently the Christological epistle. "It is the epistle which more fully and clearly than any other sets forth the supreme divinity of Christ Jesus. It is the epistle which more decisively than any other lays down for us the rule that it is by union with Christ, not by ceremonial observances or self-mortifying practices, that we can win the victory over the sinful impulses of our lower nature."[51] It is the epistle which declares most definitely that in Christ all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily, and that all this indwelling fullness of God is to be appropriated by us

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[42] Eph. 1. 3.
[43] Eph. 1. 4.
[44] Eph. 1. 6.
[45] Eph. 1. 7.
[46] Eph. 1. 9.
[47] Eph. 1. 10.
[48] Eph. 1. 11.
[49] Eph. 1. 12.
[50] Eph. 1. 13.
[51] Farrar, Messages of the Books, p. 322.

in him. He is the "brimmed receptacle and the total contents" [52] of the essential attributes of God and of all the gifts and graces of the Christian. It would be interesting to go through the epistle and collect all the items of its testimony to the supremacy and the sufficiency of Christ. We suggest only a few of them.

We have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins, in him.[53] He is the image of the invisible God.[54] All things have been created in him and through him and unto him.[55] Pascal once said: "Jesus Christ is the goal of all, and the center to which all leads. Who knows him knows the reason of all things." Paul here declares that he is the Author and the End of creation, the Creative Agent and the Final Cause of the universe. In him all things consist.[56] He maintains universal existence. Without him there would be disintegration and chaos come again. He is the first-born from the dead.[57] He is the Head of the Church.[57] He has the preeminence in all things.[57] He is the universal Mediator, through whom alone peace and reconciliation have come.[58] He is in us, the hope of glory.[59] He is the explanation and the consummation of all the mysterious dispensations of God.[60] In him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.[61]

All of our wisdom, then, should be found in him. We have no need to go searching into the pagan philosophies and theosophies for any superior wisdom or knowledge they may have. Christianity was superior to the Gnosticism and the Manicheanism of Paul's day, as it is superior to the occult Hindu theosophies of to-day. No one need turn to them for enlightenment or comfort until he has exhausted all the fullness of wisdom hidden in Christ. *All* wisdom

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[52] *Ibid.*, p. 313.
[53] Col. 1. 14.
[54] Col. 1. 15.
[55] Col. 1. 16.
[56] Col. 1. 17.
[57] Col. 1. 18.
[58] Col. 1. 20.
[59] Col. 1. 27.
[60] Col. 1. 25–27.
[61] Col. 2. 3.

is in him, not a part of it only, not some single phase or fragment, but the inexhaustible fullness of wisdom and knowledge is in him. It may not be apparent at first sight. It is not open to every careless passer-by. It is a *hidden* treasure. It is to be appreciated only by long-continued research. Let no man think that he knows all about it after a mere surface survey. As the miners dig and delve for the gold, so there must be earnest searching as for hid treasure before anyone can know the secret depths of the truth. The possibility of reaching the truth is open to all, but it involves labor on the part of each. Superficial investigation will be unsatisfactory. Thorough research will insure adequate reward. The riches of the full assurance of understanding of the mystery of God, even Christ, is not to be obtained by any cheap observance of external asceticisms or ritualisms and is not to be imparted through the persuasiveness of any man's speech. It is given by Christ, and by Christ alone. He promised that his spirit would lead into truth, and it is a delusion to think that truth can be found anywhere else.

The Christian is to walk in Christ, rooted and builded up in him, and established in faith in him.[62] William Law repeats Paul's exhortation here in these words: "Wherever thou goest, whatever thou doest, at home or abroad, in the field or at church, do all in a desire of union with Christ, in imitation of his tempers and inclinations, and look upon all as nothing but that which exercises and increases the spirit and the life of Christ in thy soul. From morning to night keep Jesus in thy heart, long for nothing, desire nothing, hope for nothing, but to have all that is within thee changed into the spirit and temper of the holy Jesus. Let this be thy Christianity, thy church, and thy religion. For this new birth in Christ thus firmly believed, and continually desired, will do everything that thou wantest to have done in thee; it will dry up all the springs of vice, stop all the

[62] Col. 2. 6, 7.

workings of evil in thy nature; it will bring all that is good into thee; it will open all the gospel within thee, and thou wilt know what it is to be taught of God. This longing desire of thy heart to be one with Christ will soon put a stop to all the vanity of thy life, and nothing will be admitted to enter into thy heart or proceed from it but what comes from God and returns to God; thou wilt soon be, as it were, tied and bound in the chains of all holy affections and desires; thy mouth will have a watch set upon it, thine ears would willingly hear nothing that does not tend to God, nor thine eyes be open but to see and find occasions for doing good." [63]

John Wesley read William Law's books while he was seeking for victory in his personal Christian experience and he says: "They convinced me more than ever of the exceeding height and depth and breadth of the law of God. The light flowed in so mightily upon my soul that everything appeared in a new view. I cried to God for help; resolved as I had never done before, not to prolong the time of obeying him." [64] There is much of the spirit of Paul and of John in the writings of William Law, and in the extract we have given we have his conception of what Paul meant when he said, "Walk in Christ!"

"In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." [65] John said, "The Logos was with God and was God . . . and the Logos became flesh." [66] This statement in Colossians is the closest parallel in the writings of Paul, and, indeed, in the entire New Testament, to these declarations of John. It is interesting to see that when Paul reaches his highest heights, as in that thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians and in certain passages of these Epistles to the

[63] Law, Spirit of Prayer, pp. 49, 50.

[64] Wesley, Works, iii, p. 71.

[65] Col. 2. 9.

[66] John 1. 1, 14.

Colossians and the Ephesians, he most closely approximates the characteristic and continuous utterances of John. John was the most sublime theologian and the greatest saint. Paul at his best comes within sight of the plane on which John continually lived.

It would be well to remember also in connection with this passage that whatever Pleroma Paul here posits of the Christ he goes on in the same sentence to say is accessible to us and we are to incarnate it even as he. "All the fullness of God is in him, that from him it may pass into us. We might start back from such bold words if we did not remember that the same apostle who here tells us that that fullness dwells in Jesus, crowns his wonderful prayer for the Ephesian Christians with that daring petition, That ye may be filled with all the fullness of God. The treasure was lodged in the earthen vessel of Christ's manhood that it might be within our reach. . . . The process of receiving of all the divine fullness is a continuous one. We can but be approximating to the possession of the infinite treasure which is ours in Christ; and since the treasure is infinite, and we can indefinitely grow in capacity of receiving God, there must be an eternal continuance of the filling and an eternal increase of the measure of what fills us. Our natures are elastic; and in love and knowledge, as well as in purity and capacity for blessedness, there are no bounds to be set to their possible expansion.

"They will be widened by bliss into a greater capacity for bliss. The indwelling Christ will enlarge the place of his habitation, and as the walls stretch and the roofs soar, he will fill the greater house with the light of his presence and the fragrance of his name. The condition of this continuous reception of the abundant gift of a divine life is abiding in Jesus. It is in him that we are being filled full—and it is only so long as we continue in him that we continue full. We cannot bear away our supplies, as one might a full bucket from a well, and keep it full. All the grace will trickle out

and disappear unless we live in constant union with our Lord, whose Spirit passes into our deadness only so long as we are joined to him." [67] As we once heard it said, it is like filling a bowl with milk in the evening and filling a baby. In the morning the bowl is still full, but the baby is empty; and the difference between the two is that the bowl is dead and the baby is living. Life needs a constant supply to keep it alive and to give it any increase of strength and of powers. The life of the Christian must come from Christ, and from Christ alone.

Christ is the Head of all principalities and powers, having despoiled them and triumphed over them on the cross.[68] Christ is the single source of all spiritual life.[69] Christ is seated on the right hand of God.[70] He will be manifested in glory.[71] He is all and in all.[72] He is the one whom we serve.[73] We have not begun to exhaust what this epistle has to tell us of Christ. We have not noticed some almost equally important passages; but sufficient have been cited to show that this epistle is preeminently the Christological epistle of the New Testament. We value it chiefly because in it Christ is shown to be supreme and the sufficient Mediator, precluding all angel worship in the Christian Church and all theories of emanations in Christian philosophy; and because in Christ there is proven the necessity for a Christian democracy, precluding all arrogant aristocracies and esoteric circles in the Christian faith; and because in Christ there is set forth the freedom of the Christian from all necessity of ascetic practices and ritualistic mummeries and mummies, since all his rights and privileges are guaranteed to him in Christ alone.

The lines ascribed to Saint Patrick summarize the con-

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[67] Maclaren, *op. cit.*, pp. 196–7.
[68] Col. 2. 10, 15.
[69] Col. 2. 19.
[70] Col. 3. 1.
[71] Col. 3. 4.
[72] Col. 3. 11.
[73] Col. 3. 24.

ception of what Christ may be to the believer, as set forth in this epistle by Paul.

> Christ, as a light
> Illumine and guide me!
> Christ as a shield o'ershadow and cover me!
> Christ be under me, Christ be over me!
> Christ be beside me
> On left hand and right!
> Christ be before me, behind me, about me,
> Christ this day be within and without me!
>
> Christ, the lowly and meek,
> Christ, the All-Powerful, be
> In the heart of each to whom I speak,
> In the mouth of each who speaks to me!
> In all who draw near me
> Or see me or hear me.

Bengel said, "Ἐν *αὐτῷ περιπατεῖτε. In eo ambulate; in illo solo. Hic Epistola scopus est*—Walk in Christ, in Christ alone. This is the scope of the Epistle." Calvin said, "*Brevis Epistola, sed nucleum Evangelii continens*—The epistle is short, but containing the kernel of the gospel."

VII. Genuineness of the Epistle

The external evidence is good. The epistle is mentioned by Irenæus, Clement, and Tertullian. It may be quoted by Justin Martyr, who calls Christ "the firstborn of all creation." It seems to be quoted also in the Epistle of Barnabas. It was in Marcion's collection of the Pauline letters. It was included in the canonical list of the Muratorian Fragment, as well as in the Itala and the Peshito, the bibles of the Western and the Eastern church. To most modern critics the internal evidence is just as good. Attempts were made to disprove the genuineness of the epistle on the ground that there were new terms in it which Paul had not used in his former epistles, and on the further ground that there was a development of the Christological and other doctrine beyond

the stages represented in these earlier and undisputed writings. All such criticism proceeds upon the supposition that Paul must be limited to a narrow vocabulary and a stereotyped style and must be considered incapable of any development of his ideas after they once have been expressed. That never has been true of any genius, and the tendency is to discount any such criticism as applied to Paul. Weiss is sure that "the wealth of Paul's intellect lent him new expressions for the new thoughts that stirred him at this time, giving him power to present old truths in a new form," [74] and the best modern authorities are ready to agree with him and to recognize the genuineness of the epistle. Of these we name only von Soden, Jülicher, Harnack, Zahn, Lightfoot, Sanday, Moffatt, Vincent, and Adeney.

[74] Weiss, Introduction, I, p. 332.

CHAPTER XI

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

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THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

I. The Epistle from Laodicea and the Epistle to the Ephesians

Near the close of the Epistle to the Colossians Paul writes, "When this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea." [1] What epistle is this to which Paul refers? There is no Epistle to the Laodiceans in our New Testament canon. Yet the Laodiceans had an epistle which they had written to Paul or which Paul had written to them, or which somebody else had written and which Paul considered of enough importance to be sent for by the Colossians and to be read by them.

1. **The Epistle to the Laodiceans.** (1) *Its Contents.* We said that the Epistle to the Laodiceans is not in our New Testament, and that is true, but there is an Epistle to the Laodiceans in existence which reads as follows: "Here beginneth the Epistle to the Laodiceans which is not in the Canon. Paul, an apostle, not of men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ, to the brethren who are at Laodicea; grace to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to God in all my prayers that you are dwelling, and abiding in him, awaiting the behest in the day of doom. For neither the vain speaking of some unwise men has hindered you, the which would turn you from the truth of the gospel which is preached by me. And now those who are mine to the profit of the truth of the

[1] Col. 4. 16.

gospel, God shall make deserving and doing graciousness of works and having health of everlasting life. And now my bonds are manifest which I suffer in Christ Jesus and in which I am glad and rejoice. And that is to me everlasting health, that this same thing be done by your prayers and ministering of the Holy Ghost, either by life or by death. Forsooth to me it is life to live in Christ, and to die is joy. And his mercy shall do in you the same thing, that ye may have the same love, and that ye be of one will. Therefore, ye well-beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, and walk ye in the dread of God, as ye have heard in my presence; and life shall be to you without end. Assuredly, it is God who worketh in you. And, my well-beloved brethren, do ye without any withdrawing whatever things ye do. Rejoice in Christ and eschew the men defiled with lucre or foul winning. Let all your asking be open toward God and be ye steadfast in the knowledge of Christ. And do ye the things that be holy and true and chaste and just and able to be loved; and keep ye in heart the things that ye have heard and received; and peace shall be to you. All holy men greet you. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. And cause ye that the epistle of the Colossians be read to you. Here endeth the epistle to the Laodiceans." [2]

(2) *Its Character.* Lightfoot says of this epistle that it "is a cento of Pauline phrases strung together without any definite connexion or any clear object. They are taken chiefly from the Epistle to the Philippians. . . . The apostle's injunction in Col. 4. 16 suggested the forgery, and such currency as it ever attained was due to the support which that passage was supposed to give it. Unlike most forgeries, it had no ulterior aim. It was not framed to advance any particular opinions, whether heterodox or

[2] For the old English, see Westcott, History of the Canon, p. 461. A translation into more modern English may be found in The New Century Bible. Ephesians, Appendix A, p. 179.

orthodox. It has no doctrinal peculiarities. Thus it is quite harmless, so far as falsity and stupidity combined can ever be regarded as harmless." [3]

(3) *Its History.* The history of this Epistle to the Laodiceans "forms one of the most interesting episodes in the literary history of the Bible." [4] It probably was written in Greek and translated into Latin. It was widely known before the end of the fourth century. It was condemned as apocryphal by Jerome, A. D. 400, Theodore of Mopsuestia, A. D. 450, and Theodoret, A. D. 450, and by the Second Council of Nicæa, A. D. 787. On the other hand, Gregory the Great declared it to be genuine, A. D. 550-600. It is in one of the two most ancient copies of the Vulgate, and it occurs very frequently in the Western manuscripts of the Bible. It is found in the great Gothic Bible of Toledo, which belongs to the eighth century, in the Book of Armagh, A. D. 807, and in Charlemagne's Bible of the ninth century, and in the great Bible of the King's Library and other splendid copies probably prepared for church use and now preserved with the two last named in the British Museum. It passed from the Latin Bibles into the early vernacular versions. Some fourteen editions of the German Bible contained it before Luther's day. It was in the first Bohemian Bible of 1488, and also in the Albigensian version made at Lyons. It was not included in Wiclif's Bible, but it was added to it in some of the later manuscripts. "Thus for more than nine centuries this forged epistle hovered about the doors of the sacred canon, without either finding admission or being peremptorily excluded. At length the revival of learning dealt its deathblow to this as to so many other spurious pretensions. As a rule, Roman Catholics and Reformers were equally strong in their condemnation of its worthlessness. . . . The dawn of the Reformation effectually scared away

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[3] Lightfoot, Colossians, pp. 279, 280.

[4] Westcott, The Canon of the New Testament, p. 458.

this ghost of a Pauline epistle, and it will not again be suffered to haunt the mind of the church." [5]

2. **Hypotheses.** Having disposed of this spurious Epistle to the Laodiceans in this summary fashion, Lightfoot discusses fourteen other hypotheses concerning the real Epistle from Laodicea mentioned in the Epistle to the Colossians. He concludes that it was not an epistle written by the Laodiceans to Paul or to Epaphras or to the Colossians, and that it was not an epistle written by Paul while resident in Laodicea, and that it was not an epistle written to the Laodiceans by John or Luke or Epaphras or Paul, and that it is not a lost epistle, and that it cannot be identified with any other of the canonical epistles which some have suggested in this connection, either Hebrews or First or Second Thessalonians or Galatians or Philemon or First Timothy, but that it can be identified with the Epistle to the Ephesians, and therefore is in the New Testament canon to-day.

3. **Conclusion.** The epistle from Laodicea mentioned by Paul in the Epistle to the Colossians is our Epistle to the Ephesians which, having been brought to Laodicea and there read, was to be forwarded to the next city eastward in the Lycus valley that the Christians at Colossæ also might have the benefit of its contents. They had an epistle of their own which they could exchange with the Laodiceans, and both of the churches could profit with the reading of both the epistles. Tertullian tells us twice that Marcion called our Epistle to the Ephesians the Epistle to the Laodiceans, and we will see later that there is reason to suppose that the Epistle to the Ephesians was an encyclical letter, sent from city to city through Asia Minor and so reaching Laodicea and Colossæ in turn. Accepting this identification of the Epistle to the Ephesians with "the epistle from Laodicea," we have in Col. 4. 16 a strong link of connection between the two epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians. There are

[5] Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, pp. 297, 298.

many other facts which unite these two epistles closely together, and we shall turn next to these.

II. The Epistle to the Colossians and the Epistle to the Ephesians

1. Resemblances. (1) These are both prison epistles.[6] (2) Tychicus is intrusted with them both.[7] Written from the same place and carried by the same man, it would not be surprising if they were written at nearly the same time, and they discussed similar themes in similar style. This we find to be true of them. (3) The salutations practically are the same. (4) The general structure of the two epistles is the same. (5) They have the same general subjects and the same leading thoughts. "The relations of Christ to the universe and to the church are a dominant theme in both; the references to the spirit-world and its principalities and powers, and to the need of divine wisdom and knowledge among the readers, are common; and the ethical teaching is strikingly similar, both in its precepts and in its lines of application."[8] (6) There are most remarkable parallel passages. Compare Eph. 1. 7 with Col. 1. 14; Eph. 1. 10 with Col. 1. 20; Eph. 1. 15-17 with Col. 1. 3, 4; Eph. 1. 18 with Col. 1. 27; Eph. 1. 19 with Col. 2. 12; Eph. 1. 21-23 with Col. 1. 16-19. These examples are taken from the first chapter of Ephesians only, and a similar list can be made out for all the other chapters as well. (7) There are the same words and phrases and similitudes, the same counsels and exhortations. There are similar terms, similar doctrines, and similar descriptions. Samuel Davidson reckons that "out of the one hundred and fifty-five verses contained in the Epistle to the Ephesians seventy-eight contain expressions identical with those in the Colossian letter."[9] Adam

[6] Col. 4. 10; Eph. 6. 20.

[7] Col. 4. 7–9; Eph. 6. 21, 22.

[8] Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 343.

[9] Davidson, Introduction, II, p. 276.

Clarke says, "No other two epistles exhibit so many marks of correspondency and resemblance." Farrar sums up the truth in one sentence, "They are twin sisters of close resemblance yet marked individuality, whose faces, alike yet different, can only be explained by their common parentage." [10] We conclude that they were written by the same man at about the same time, and that they were addressed to churches in about the same general environment and spiritual condition.

2. **Differences.** (1) In Colossians the personal element is more apparent than in Ephesians. Paul has concrete relations in mind as he writes Colossians and only general truth in his thought as he writes Ephesians. Colossians is Pauline throughout, and Ephesians is more Johannine than any other writing of Paul. Colossians has personal references, local allusions, and definite errors in view; in Ephesians the truth expressed is of universal application and is not to be appropriated to any particular individuals or place. (2) Colossians is briefer, more formal, and more logical. Ephesians is longer, more rhetorical, and more mystical. They differ in length and they differ in style. (3) Colossians is more controversial and polemical; Ephesians is more placid and poetical. Farrar says, "In Colossians Paul is the soldier; in Ephesians the builder." [11] Findlay puts it in this way: "Colossians is a letter of discussion, Ephesians of reflection. In the former we behold Paul in spiritual conflict, in the latter his soul is at rest." Then he quotes the following figure as descriptive of their differing styles: "The first is like the mountain stream cleaving its way with swift passage, by deep ravines and sudden, broken turnings, through some barrier thrown across its path; the second is the far-spreading lake, in which its chafed waters find rest, mirroring in their clear depths the eternal heavens above." [12] In

[10] Farrar, Messages, p. 326.

[11] Life of Paul, p. 632.

[12] Findlay, The Epistles of Paul, p. 184.

Colossians there is the clash of opposing arms, the crash of antagonistic creeds; in Ephesians there is the peace of a service of undisturbed praise and prayer. Colossians is a challenge to conflict, abrupt, forcible, earnest; Ephesians is a call to quiet meditation in all calmness of spirit and rest of soul. In Colossians there is the lightning flash and the thunder roll; in Ephesians the storm has been followed with a flood of sunshine and the whole landscape is bathed in light and in peace. (4) The subjects are much alike, but not identical. Colossians is the Christological epistle; Ephesians is the epistle of the holy catholic church. In Colossians the relation between Christ and the universe is set before us, and in Ephesians the relation between Christ and the church. (5) Colossians has only one allusion to the Old Testament and no quotation from it; in Ephesians there are eight or nine quotations, and the Old Testament coloring is more decided throughout. (6) One of the characteristic phrases of Ephesians, "the heavenlies," is not to be found in Colossians at all. (7) The work of the Holy Spirit is emphasized much more in Ephesians than in Colossians. There are twelve references to it in the former and only one in the latter. (8) There are five paragraphs peculiar to Ephesians, the unity of the church of the redeemed with its foreordained perfection and its universal outlook (1. 3-14), the ideal unity working to the building up of the Body of Christ in love (4. 4-16), contrast between the walk in the light and the works of darkness (5. 8-14), the mystery of marriage as a symbol of the union between Christ and his church (5. 22-33), the whole panoply of God insuring the Christian's safety and victory and peace (6. 10-17). These five paragraphs are not paralleled in Colossians.

3. **Their Order in Time of Composition.** Lightfoot has suggested that "the Epistle to the Ephesians stands to the Epistle to the Colossians in very much the same relation as the Romans to the Galatians. The one is the general and systematic exposition of the same truths which appear in a

special bearing in the other."[13] Weiss deems it "most natural to suppose that the epistle designed for concrete needs was written first; wider and freer expression being then given by the apostle in a letter of more general character to the thoughts by which he was stirred."[14] Colossians was called forth by a special emergency, and, having written it, Paul found himself sufficiently interested in the new theme to elaborate it in a second epistle; and naturally, the second treatment was fuller and freer, more rounded and rhythmical. Cut loose from all local entanglements, it was ready to rise into the heavenlies and abide there, like a new aeroplane wheeling where it would and celebrating the conquest of an element hitherto never overcome. Colossians was written first and Ephesians is the author's improvement upon it. Note that little word "also" in Eph. 6. 21—"That ye also may know my affairs," Tychicus will tell you all about me. The Epistle to the Colossians had insured this knowledge there at Colossæ, and now that those addressed in this epistle may also know these things this second epistle is written and Tychicus is intrusted with it as well as with the other two, to Philemon and to the Colossians.

III. General Characteristics of the Epistle

1. **Its Catholicity.** Pfleiderer says, "The idea of catholicity is here roused to dogmatic definiteness and predominant significance."[15] We have a wider outlook in this epistle than in any other. It is the universal church Paul has in mind as he writes, the church of all of the nations and of all the ages. He thinks of it with its present needs but also with its future glories. He sees the victory from afar and by faith he brings it nigh. The word "all" occurs in this epistle fifty-one times. God worketh *all* things after the

[13] Lightfoot, Biblical Essays, p. 395.
[14] Weiss, Introduction, I, p. 347.
[15] Pfleiderer, Paulinism, II, p. 164.

counsel of his will. He sums up *all* things in Christ. He filleth *all* in *all*. *All* things are put into subjection under his feet. He sits far above *all* rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. He is able to do exceeding abundantly above *all* that we ask or think. The shield of faith is able to quench *all* the fiery darts of the evil one. The victory of the Christian is complete. The sovereignty of the Christ is *all*-embracing. The holy catholic church is to be supreme in the universe. It is the Body of Him who filleth all in all.

2. **Its Comprehensiveness.** We have here the summation of all the Pauline thought along this line. One half of the epistle is given up to theology, and it is the last lengthy theological discussion we have from Paul's pen. A single paragraph in Philippians and single sentences in the Pastoral Epistles may have some theological importance and may have been written later, but there is nothing in them to compare with these beginning chapters of the Epistle to the Ephesians. Here the aged seer formulates his faith and his hope for the last time, and his creed is no dry-as-dust shibboleth or lifeless form. It is a pæan of praise from beginning to end. The latter half of the epistle is given to practical ethics, and the principles are laid down which may regulate the whole of human conduct aright. The sweep of Paul's thought takes in the Gentile and the Jew, the heaven and the earth, the past and the present, and the timeless ages to come. It is a little volume of comprehensive import. It is more of a book than a letter. The letter form in which it is written is unessential, and easily might be taken away. It is only the wrapping of the book. The value is all within.

3. **Its Literary Finish.** This epistle is a work of art. Its sublimity of thought is matched by its beauty of expression. Most of the Pauline letters were written at white heat and bear the traces of great haste in their composition. The Epistle to the Romans seems to have been written in a period

of comparative leisure, but the Epistle to the Ephesians is written from a prison cell, where Paul probably was more free from interruption than he could have been at any time at Corinth. At any rate, Paul had thought his way through this line of reasoning and exhortation in the composition of the Epistle to the Colossians, and this epistle represents his second thought upon these themes. He has pondered them long, and now that he writes them down, his periods take an unwonted elegance; he finds himself rising into unprecedented eloquence. His rapt soul expresses itself in lyric beauty, in reverent, rhythmic reasoning which rises to the level of an epic.

Von Soden declares that the whole first part has a liturgical character and seems like one of those hymns in which the members of the church are directed to teach and admonish one another. Kay calls it "the Christian's Sixty-eighth Psalm." Schaff says it is "a solemn liturgy, and ode to Christ and his spotless bride, the Song of Songs in the New Testament."[16] Lock affirms that "when Paul wrote this letter he was, as at Philippi, singing hymns in prison."[17] The language of this epistle has been caught up by multitudes of hymn-writers in the modern church. Bunyan's immortal allegory got its suggestion and much of its inspiration here. The world's literature would suffer an irreparable loss if all the conceptions furnished it from this epistle were to be swept away.

4. **Its Lofty Flights.** This epistle has been called "the epistle of the heavenlies," "the third heaven epistle," and "the epistle of the ascension." Its chapters have been called "the Alps of the New Testament." It soars away into the highest heights of speculation. It begins with one sentence with seven relative clauses "which rise like a thick cloud of incense higher and higher to the very throne of God."[16]

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[16] Schaff, *op. cit.*, I, p. 780.

[17] Hastings's Bible Dictionary, I, p. 720.

Note the characteristic words in this epistle—the heavenlies, spiritual, glory, mystery, plenitude, light, love, grace, and peace. These are the stars and the suns which illuminate the firmament of Paul's thought here. We need telescopes of spiritual intuition to reach or grasp any clear notion of these realities in Paul's experience and teaching. He is at his highest pitch of inspiration. He is at his best of thinking and writing. Paul sits in his prison cell, but he sits at the same time in the heavenly places with Christ.

IV. Characteristic Conceptions of the Epistle

1. God. (1) *His Will.* Salmond says of this epistle that "it is a distinctively theological epistle, in the sense in which the Epistle to the Romans is distinctively anthropological or psychological, and that to the Colossians Christological. . . . What gives it its peculiar majesty is the way in which it carries everything back to God himself, his will, his eternal purpose and counsel. . . . The great subjects of predestination and the divine plan, eternal in the mind of God, centering in Christ and fulfilled in him, have a larger and a more definite place in this epistle than in any other." [18] Paul is an apostle by the will of God (1. 1). God has foreordained us unto adoption according to the good pleasure of his will (1. 5). He has made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him (1. 9). We were foreordained to be a heritage, according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will (1. 11). The manifold wisdom of God is now made known through the church, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord (3. 11). We are to understand what the will of the Lord is (5. 17). We are to do the will of God from the heart (6. 6).

(2) *His Fatherhood.* The will of God is the will of our

[18] Salmond, Commentary on Ephesians, p. 237.

Father. Emphasis is laid in this epistle upon the Fatherhood of God as well as his foreordination. Eight times the title "Father" is given to him; and in the Epistle to the Romans, which is much longer, it occurs only four times. The epistle begins, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (1. 3). He is our Father (1. 2). He is the Father of all (4. 6). He is the Father of glory (1. 17). He is the Father (2. 18; 5. 20; 6. 23), from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named (3. 14).

(3) *His Grace.* It is in the salutation, Grace to you and peace with God (1. 2). It is in the benediction, Grace be with all them that love our Lord (6. 24). Again and again through the epistle the gift of grace is emphasized. Salvation is by grace. It is all to the glory of God's grace. Thirteen times the word occurs. *"The Grace of God"* would be a good title for the first three chapters. *"The Grace of God as Manifested in Christian Living"* would be a good title for the last three chapters. "By grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God"—that is the text of the whole discussion.[19]

2. **Unity.** The Lord prayed for all believers that they might be one, even as he and the Father were one,[20] and Lock declares that this whole epistle "might be described as an expression of thanksgiving that the Lord's prayer for his church as embodied in John 17 was in process of fulfillment." He points out that almost every verse in that seventeenth chapter of John finds a parallel in this epistle: The stress on God's fatherhood in verse 1, the power over all flesh in verse 2, life identified with knowledge in verse 3, the preexistent glory of Christ in verse 5, the revelation to a few in verse 6, Christ glorified in his disciples in verse 10, the prayer for unity based upon God's unity in verse 11, Christ's joy fulfilled in his disciples in verse 12, the antag-

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[19] Eph. 2. 8.

[20] John 17. 21–23.

onism of the world in verse 14, the protection from the evil one in verse 15, sanctification by truth in verse 17, the unity of Christians as a means of promoting Christ's work in verse 21, God's love for Christians like His love for Christ in verse 23, and God's love for Christ before the foundation of the world in verse 24. These parallels are so striking that Lock suggests that Paul must have heard the very words used by Jesus in this closing prayer of his ministry, possibly from the lips of John himself at the time when they were discussing the terms of unity between Jew and Gentile as Christian believers through apostolic preaching. There at Jerusalem John may have repeated the Lord's prayer for unity again and again, and it may have been chiefly responsible for the amicable settlement of all differences at that time.[21] This is the epistle of Church Unity. It sets forth the essentials of unity among the members of the church catholic, the unity of the individual believer with Christ, the unity of all things in God.

(1) *In Christ.* Christ and the Christian are one. The believer's identification with Christ is set forth in this epistle more clearly than ever before. It is a chief theme in all of the Pauline epistles. The life of the Christian is to be a life in Christ. Those two words "in Christ" sum up the Pauline theology. They occur one hundred and seventy-six times in Paul's epistles, thirty-six times in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and only once in the Epistle to the Colossians. They express the absoluteness of the union between Christ and the Christian. For the Christian to live is Christ. In spirit and in experience he is one with his Lord. This relation between the individual believer and Christ leads to a like relation between the universal church and the Christ. It is his Building, fitly framed together, and growing into a holy temple in the Lord (2. 21). It is his Bride, made glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, holy and with-

[21] Hastings's Bible Dictionary, I, pp. 714, 716.

out blemish (5. 27). The unity of the Building in which Christ is the chief corner stone and the believers are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets into the one habitation of God, and the unity of the marriage relation in which the Bride becomes with her husband one flesh do not seem to satisfy the demands of the apostle's thought at this point. He calls the church the Body of Christ (1. 23; 4. 4, 12, 13), and this is said to be the highest and holiest name ever given to it. These are not mere figures of speech to Paul. They represent a great Divine-Human reality. The union of Christ with the church is expressed in the reciprocal terms: He is its Saviour (5. 23). He is its cornerstone (2. 20). He is its Husband (5. 25). He is its Head (1. 22; 4. 15; 5. 23).

(2) *In the Spirit.* The words "Spirit" and "spiritual" occur thirteen times in the epistle, and only once in the Epistle to the Colossians: God hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ (1. 3). We are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (1. 13). He will be to us a Spirit of wisdom and revelation (1. 17). We will have our access in one Spirit unto the Father (2. 18). We become a habitation of God in the Spirit (2. 22). The mystery of Christ hath been revealed in the Spirit (3. 5). We are strengthened with power through his Spirit (3. 16). We are to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (4. 3). We are not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God (4. 30). We are to be filled with the Spirit (5. 18). The sword of the Spirit is the word of God (6. 17). We are to pray at all seasons in the Spirit (6. 18). The Holy Spirit of God is the Spirit of Sealing, the Spirit of Wisdom, the Spirit of Access, the Spirit of Revelation, the Spirit of Missions, the Spirit of Unity, the Spirit of Power, the Spirit of Prayer. We are to be renewed in the spirit of our minds until it becomes identical with that of the Spirit of God (4. 23), and in that unity of the Spirit we will find the spirit of unity in the church.

(3) *In Love.* The word "love" occurs nineteen times in this epistle, more often than in the Epistle to the Galatians or the Epistle to the Romans. Unity in Christ and in the Spirit is unity in love. Christ is the Beloved (1. 6). We are to be holy in love (1. 4). God's great love wherewith he loved us is the ground of our salvation (2. 4). We are to show love to all the saints (1. 15). We are to be rooted and grounded in love (3. 17). We are to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge (3. 19). We are to forbear one another in love (4. 2). We are to speak the truth in love (4. 15). The church is to build itself up in love (4. 16). We are to walk in love, even as Christ also loved us (5. 2). Husbands are to love their wives even as Christ loved the church (5. 25, 28, 33). The benediction prays for peace and love with faith for all the brethren, and grace for all them that love the Lord (6. 23, 24). The secret of unity is to be found in love for the Lord and love for all the brethren. The unity is not necessarily in organization or in catechism or creed. It is a unity in Christ, in the Spirit, in love. Protestants, Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics may unite in these.

The word "peace" occurs eight times in the epistle. The thought of unity which runs through the epistle finds expression in an unusual number of Greek compounds, both nouns and verbs, setting forth the closeness of the connection existing between God and his creatures, God and man, and all the members of the Christian Church. Some of these compounds are absolutely unique, seemingly manufactured by the apostle to emphasize his conception of the fellowship in Christ (3. 6). Others, like them in their use if not in their uniqueness, may be found in 2. 5, 6, 19, 22; 4. 3, 16.

3. The phrase, the heavenlies, is characteristic of this epistle. 4. True knowledge is emphasized from beginning to end. 5. Other frequently recurring words are "fullness" and "filling," six times; "mystery," six times; "glory," seven times; "all," fifty-one times.

V. Outline of the Epistle

I. *Doctrinal*—Chapters 1 to 3.
1. Salutation, 1. 1, 2.
2. Doxology for spiritual blessings, 1. 3–14.
3. Thanksgiving and prayer for the saints, 1. 15–23.
4. Salvation by grace, 2. 1–10.
5. Gentile and Jew united in the Spirit, 2. 11–22.
6. Paul's personal relation to his gospel, 3. 1–13.
7. Prayer for all believers, 3. 14–19.
8. Doxology, 3. 20, 21.

II. *Practical*—Chapters 4 to 6.
1. The unity of the church as the body of Christ, 4. 1–16.
2. Putting on the new man, 4. 17–24.
3. Things to avoid, 4. 25–32.
4. Walk in love, 5. 1, 2.
5. Walk as children of light, 5. 3–14.
6. Walk as wise, 5. 15–21.
7. Wives and husbands, 5. 22–33.
8. Children and parents, 6. 1–4.
9. Servants and masters, 6. 5–9.
10. The panoply of God, 6. 10–20.
11. Tychicus sent, 6. 21, 22.
12. Benediction, 6. 23, 24.

As a memory aid we suggest an alliterative outline under eight heads, including only the epistle proper and adding the salutation at one end and the benediction at the other: 1. A Christian Greeting (1. 1, 2). 2. The Christian's Praise (1. 3-14). 3. A Christian's Prayer (1. 15-23). 4. A Christian's Profession of Faith (2. 1-22). 5. A Christian Preacher (3. 1-13). 6. A Christian Prayer (3. 14-21). 7. The Christian Peripatetic (4. 1-6. 9). 8. The Christian Panoply (6. 10-20). 9. A Christian Paraclete (6. 21, 22). 10. A Christian Benediction (6. 23-24).

VI. Conclusions

1. Genuineness. The most ancient authorities which we can quote are unanimous in assigning the Epistle to the Ephesians to Paul. We can trace some evidence of its cir-

culation at the close of the first century or the very beginning of the second century, and by the close of the second century it was widely known and generally used and always ascribed to the authorship of Paul. It may be mentioned, as we have seen, in the New Testament itself, in Col. 4. 16. There are phrases which seem like echoes of this epistle in Clement of Rome, the Teaching of the Apostles, and the Epistle of Barnabas. Ignatius uses the characteristic expressions of the epistle, and possible quotations from it are found in Polycarp and Hermas. Hippolytus tells us that the Valentinians quoted Eph. 3. 4-18 as Scripture. With Irenæus the testimony becomes as clear as possible, for he quotes the epistle by name and says that Paul was its author. The Muratorian Canon includes Ephesus as one of the churches to which Paul wrote his epistles. Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian are equally explicit, and from their time on the testimony is continuous and clear.

It has been said that if the external evidence for this epistle is inadequate, then we have no adequate evidence that Virgil wrote the Georgics, or Horace the Odes, or Augustine the Confessions.[22] Nevertheless, some modern scholars have doubted or denied the Pauline authorship. Schleiermacher, De Wette, Weizsäcker, Ewald, Baur, Holtzmann, Renan, Schwegler, Davidson, Cone, Moffatt, Dobschütz, Pfleiderer, Clemen, Scott, and von Soden are among them. Jülicher cannot decide for or against the authenticity of the epistle, but Harnack thinks that the weight of external testimony in its favor is decisive. Weiss, Zahn, Shaw, Knowling, Lünemann, Lock, Robertson, Bacon, Schenkel, Salmon, and Godet agree. McGiffert concludes that the authenticity of the Epistle to the Colossians carries with it that of its companion epistle. Dr. Hort was sure that Ephesians bore "the impress of Paul's wonderful mind." Dr. J. S. Howson, the biographer of Paul, after a lifetime

[22] The Temple Bible, Ephesians, p. xv.

given to the study of the Pauline epistles, said, "No one but Paul could have been the writer" of Ephesians. The conclusion of the article on Ephesians in the Standard Bible Dictionary says, "Ephesians stands thus as an almost necessary letter for Paul, in view of the lines along which his thought was developing and the increasingly significant problems presented by his work." [23] Practically all of the English commentators maintain its genuineness.

2. An Encyclical. The address to "the saints that are at Ephesus" is found in all the manuscripts of the epistle, both uncial and cursive, except three. It is found also in all the versions. As far as we know, the whole ancient church except Marcion—who calls this the Epistle to the Laodiceans—called the epistle by the title to which we are accustomed, "The Epistle to the Ephesians." However, there are some strange phenomena in the epistle itself which make us think that it cannot have been written for the Ephesians exclusively:

(1) Paul had lived in Ephesus longer than in any other city visited by him in his missionary labors. He must have had a host of personal acquaintances and friends in the church there. Yet this Epistle to the Ephesians has no personal greetings of any kind. He has several personal salutations in the Epistle to the Colossians, though he never had been in Colossæ. He has a score and more of personal salutations at the close of the Epistle to the Romans, though he never had been as far west as Rome. Possibly the very fact that he had such a multitude of friends in Ephesus might prevent him from choosing among them any to whom personal greetings should be sent. Yet it seems strange that he should not mention any names in a letter written to a church where he had been so long at home among them.

(2) Findlay points out the fact that in the Epistle to the Ephesians "there is an official distance and formality in the

[23] Standard Bible Dictionary, p. 215.

writer's attitude, such as we find in no other epistle, and very different from Paul's manner toward his disciples and friends. Not once does he address his readers as 'brethren' or 'beloved.' There is not a single word of familiarity or endearment in the whole letter. The benediction at the end is given in the third person, not in the second as everywhere else: Peace be to the brethren, Grace be with all that love our Lord—not, Grace be with you." [24] This seems exceedingly strange if Paul were writing to the Ephesians alone.

(3) There are several passages in the epistle in which Paul speaks as if he knew about his readers only by hearsay and as if they knew about him and his preaching only by hearsay. In 1. 15 he says that he has heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus and the faith which they show toward all the saints. In 3. 2 he puts the possibility of their having heard of his apostleship to the Gentiles hypothetically—"If so be ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given me to you-ward." In 4. 20, 21 Paul says, "Ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus." Surely, Paul never would have addressed the Ephesians as if he were uncertain whether the truth had been preached to them or as if they were personally unknown to him or he to them.

(4) With these facts in mind we go back to our manuscripts of the epistle, and we find that the two oldest and most authoritative among them, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, omit the address to the Ephesians. The same thing is true of cursive 67.

(5) The testimony of these oldest manuscripts is greatly strengthened by that of the church Fathers. Origen in the third century comments upon the greeting and gives a metaphysical sense to the phrase, omitting any local designation. Basil in the fourth century says that the address to

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[24] Findlay, The Epistles of Paul, p. 180.

the Ephesians was omitted in the ancient copies of the epistle and according to the tradition of the scholars who had preceded him. Jerome in the fifth century also is aware of a text reading as Origen read, "to the saints who are, being also faithful." The upshot of all this is that we have no evidence that the two words, ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, at Ephesus, were in the Greek text of the first three centuries.

Here, then, are the two opposing facts—that the early church always seems to have called this the Epistle to the Ephesians, while there are certain phenomena in the epistle itself and certain facts in the manuscript and patristic evidence which seem to indicate that the epistle could not have been written primarily or exclusively to the church at Ephesus. What is the explanation of these seeming contradictions? It was suspected by Beza, but first formulated and fully developed by Archbishop Ussher in 1650-1654. He suggested that the Epistle to the Ephesians was an encyclical, a sort of general epistle to all of the churches of Asia, carried by Tychicus along with the epistles to Philemon and to the Colossians eastward from Rome. Tychicus would land at Ephesus, and the church there would read the epistle first. Then Tychicus would carry the letter on to Laodicea and leave it there while he hastened on to Colossæ. The Colossians were asked in their epistle to send to Laodicea for it. Marcion called it the Epistle to the Laodiceans because of this reference in the Colossians and because this epistle really was at Laodicea and belonged to that church as much as any other of the churches in proconsular Asia. The church in general, however, preferred to call it the Epistle to the Ephesians, because Ephesus was the chief city in the district addressed, and the church at Ephesus was the largest and most important of the churches addressed, and the epistle had been first received and read there and forwarded from that center to all the other churches concerned.

This hypothesis is accepted very generally to-day. It

would explain the textual and the internal phenomena. A blank might have been left in the original manuscript for the insertion of the name of whatsoever individual church might receive the epistle; and such an apostolical encyclical would omit all local references and personal greetings and would be carried into regions where Paul never had been and where its readers would know of him only by report. This encyclical character of the letter is recognized by Bengel, Neander, Harless, Olshausen, Reuss, Ellicott, Lightfoot, Hort, Weiss, Godet, Beet, Salmond, Abbott, Sabatier, Findlay, Shaw, and many others. We call this epistle the Epistle to the Ephesians, but it really is an epistle to the general church. Christ and his church is the theme; and it has a message for the whole church in all time.

VII. Estimates of the Epistle

We read in the book of Acts that the Ephesians were led by Paul's ministry among them to burn up their books of sorcery, and the estimated value of that holocaust is put at fifty thousand drachmas, or nearly ten thousand dollars. Probably as literature all those books were to be counted as trash. The Ephesians were well repaid when they received this epistle. Its value cannot be computed in coin. It is full of the riches of Paul's intellect and of Christ's love. We note some of the estimates put upon it by those who have studied it most thoroughly and so have come to appreciate it most highly. 1. Chrysostom: "This epistle overflows with lofty thoughts and doctrines. . . . Things which Paul scarcely anywhere else utters, he here expounds." 2. Luther: "It is one of the noblest books in the New Testament, which shows thee Christ and teaches thee everything which it is necessary and good for thee to know, even though thou shouldest never see or hear of any other book or doctrine." Luther was likely to indulge in emphatic and sometimes extravagant statement, but here most of us will agree that he is well within the truth.

3. Witsius: "It is a divine epistle glowing with the flame of Christian love, and the splendor of holy light, and flowing with fountains of living water." 4. Grotius: "It equals its sublimity of ideas with words more sublime than any human language ever possessed." 5. Coleridge: "In this, the divinest composition of man, is every doctrine of Christianity; first, those doctrines peculiar to Christianity; and, secondly, those precepts common to it with natural religion." 6. Alford: "As the wonderful effect of the Spirit of inspiration on the mind of man is nowhere in Scripture more evident than in this epistle, so, to discern those things of the Spirit, is the spiritual mind here more than anywhere required. . . . It is the most heavenly work of one whose very imagination is peopled with things in the heavens, and even his fancy rapt into the visions of God." 7. Maurice: "Everyone must be conscious of an overflowing fullness in the style of this epistle, as if the apostle's mind could not contain the thoughts that were at work in him, as if each one that he uttered had a luminous train before it and behind it, from which it could not disengage itself." 8. Adolphe Monod: "It embraces in its brevity the whole field of the Christian religion, expounding now its doctrines, now its morals with such conciseness and such fullness combined that it would be difficult to name any great doctrine or any essential duty which has not its place marked in it." 9. Ellicott: "The difficulties of the first chapter are so great and so deep that the most exact language and the most discriminating analysis are too poor and too weak to convey the force or the connection of expressions so august and thoughts so unspeakably profound." 10. Riddle: "It is the greatness of the epistle which makes it so difficult; the thought seems to struggle with the words, which seem insufficient to convey the transcendent idea." 11. Pierson: "This epistle reaches the summit of the sublimity of revelation. It is Paul's third-heaven epistle. In it he soars from the depths of ruin to the heights of redemption." 12. Farrar:

"In the depth of its theology, in the loftiness of its morals, in the way in which the simplest moral truths are based upon the profoundest religious doctrines—this epistle is unparalleled. . . . It is the most sublime, the most profound, the most advanced and final utterance of Paul's gospel to the Gentiles." 13. Salmond: "With few exceptions scholars of all different schools who have studied and interpreted this epistle have been at one in regarding it as one of the sublimest and most profound of all the New Testament writings. In the judgment of many who are well entitled to deliver an opinion, it is the grandest of all the Pauline letters. There is a peculiar and a sustained loftiness in its teaching which has deeply impressed the greatest minds and has earned for it the title of 'The Epistle of the Ascension.' It tarries largely among the heavenlies, and lifts us into the eternities *a parte ante* and *a parte post*." 14. Among the unsympathetic critics who are the "exceptions" we may mention De Wette, Baur, Holtzmann, and Renan. They speak of it as "verbose, diffuse, overloaded, monotonous, and repetitious." Renan calls the epistle *une épître banale*—a third-rate composition. Moule comments upon this judgment as follows: "The criticism, read in the light, first, of the epistle itself, then in the verdict of all Christendom, can only convict the subtle literary critic of a spiritual paralysis which fatally affects even literary insight where the theme is spiritual." [25]

VIII. Differences between the Prison Epistles and the Former Ones

1. The former epistles were written while Paul was in the thick of the fight. He was an evangelist and a missionary and a church founder and a controversialist and a preacher. He was at the height of his activity and in the midst of the turmoil and battle. His letters had been mere

[25] Moule, Ephesian Studies, p. 15.

incidents in his missionary labors. They were struck off at white heat. They were samples of his arguments with his antagonists and paragraphs taken out of his most serviceable sermons. They were full of fire and energy and knock-down blows. In these prison epistles there is a gentler spirit. They come out of a quieter life and a calmer atmosphere. Paul has his parchments about him, and he has plenty of time to read them and to meditate upon them. We have here the products of the sage rather than the soldier. Paul is less of a debater and more of a philosopher. The evangelist has become a pastor. He is bent upon preserving the products of his labors. In Colossians and Ephesians the fire and fervor and aggressive zeal of Galatians and Corinthians has become conservative, careful, and faithful ministration to the flock. The evangelization of sinners has given place to the edification of the saints.

2. The former epistles were written from Greek cities. The prison epistles are written in Rome. The apostle's environment always seems to have had its effect upon his writing. It has been pointed out that the distinctive characteristic of Greek thought was the sacredness of the individual and that the former Pauline epistles deal with the individual, directing him to the true freedom and the true wisdom. On the other hand, Rome represented to the world the greatness of the community, of the family, the state, and the race; and the prison epistles face that great Roman problem—the unification of the family, the state, and the race—and Paul solves the problem by saying that it is not to be accomplished by law or by might, but "in Christ." In the imperial city there grows upon him the vision of a world-wide City of God. At the center of the empire he becomes an imperialist in even a larger sense than before. He sees the endless and limitless sovereignty of Christ transcending any possible splendor or power of an empire like Rome. It too would have a king, as unlike the emperor at Rome as could be imagined. It too would have its soldiers,

as unlike the legionaries of Rome as could be imagined. It too would gather into itself all the nations until in and through the church it had unified the universe. This wider range of thought and greater emphasis upon the supremacy of Christ is apparent in Colossians and Ephesians and Philippians, in all the church epistles of this Roman imprisonment.

3. There is a corresponding change in the characteristic phrases of the two groups of epistles. "Justification by faith" is replaced by "salvation through grace." "Christ crucified" was heard before, and now it is "Christ living in us." It was all "through Christ" in the earlier epistles, and now it is all "in Christ." Christ and his Cross was the former theme, and now the theme is Christ and his Church. The blood of Jesus is mentioned once,[26] and the cross is mentioned once.[27] Otherwise there is no reference to the death of Christ in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

4. There is a change in Paul's personal attitude toward the church. In the former epistles he was more or less on the defensive. His authority was being questioned. His reputation was undergoing continuous assault. Now his position is assured. His character is established. His authority is supreme. He is an acknowledged martyr for the faith, the chief of the apostolic company. He feels secure in the affections and the reverence of the church. He writes these letters of the third group without any of the painful solicitude for his personal reputation so manifest in the second group. With the calm dignity of a father to whom his children look for light on all problems he here expounds the faith.

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[26] Eph. 1. 7.

[27] Eph. 2. 16.

CHAPTER XII

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

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THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS[1]

I. The City of Philippi

Philippi was a Macedonian city, situated about eight miles inland from the Ægean sea, on the borders of Thrace. Its seaport was Neapolis; and from Neapolis the great military highway, the Via Egnatia, ran northward to the single pass among the peaks of the Pangæus. Philippi was built on the slopes of the hill just opposite this pass, and the Egnatian highway ran through its marketplace. Beyond Philippi to the west lay the large and fertile plain of Drama, filled with springs and trickling streams; and in the center of this plain was the marshy Lake Cercinitis. The original name of the city was Crenides, which means "The Fountains" or "The Springs," and that name probably came from the numerous springs of the neighboring plain. King Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, recognized its strategic position and made it a frontier fortress. In its neighborhood were famous gold and silver mines which King Philip developed and from which he drew the wealth which made his military establishment and achievements possible. The city grew like San Francisco, and the treasures of the mines maintained it in a marvelous development. Philip named each of the springs about the city after himself, "Philip," and all of them together, "the Philips," and the city took this plural name, Philippi. This was in the fourth century B. C. The mines were exhausted before the Christian era began,

[1] A portion of this discussion was prepared for the International Standard Bible Encyclopædia and has been incorporated here by permission.

but the city had become an important military and commercial center. All the commerce between the East and the West followed the Egnatian highway through the mountain pass to Philippi, and in its markets the life of Asia and Europe came into contact with each other.

On the plain of Philippi, in B. C. 42, Brutus and Cassius were defeated and all hopes of the old Roman republic came to an end. Mark Antony and Octavian saved the day for the Cæsars, and the emperor Augustus, needing some place to locate the soldiers who had served out their time in the army, chose Philippi, the scene of the great victory, as one site worthy of the honor. He made it a Roman military colony and called it Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensis, as a memorial to the murdered Julius Cæsar. He conferred upon it the *Jus Italicum*, which meant that its colonists had the right of constitutional government and were not subject to the provincial governor, and that they were exempt from all direct taxation in either poll or property taxes, and that they were privileged to hold and convey landed estates according to the regulations of the Roman law. These were most exceptional privileges for any Macedonian city to possess, and Philippi became a "miniature likeness of Rome." It was proud of its Roman citizenship, and with its public baths and theaters and its worship of Silvanus and Dionysus and Diana it aped the cosmopolitan character of Rome itself. More than half its people were Latin by race, but there was a sturdy minority of the old Macedonian stock, and a sprinkling of many other nationalities attracted by the military and commercial importance of the place. Among these there were a few Jews.

II. Paul and Philippi

Paul was on his second missionary journey in the year A. D. 52. He felt that he was strangely thwarted in many of his plans. He had a most distressing illness in Galatia. The Spirit would not permit him to preach in Asia, and

when he essayed to enter Bithynia the Spirit again would not suffer it. Baffled and perplexed, the apostle with his two companions, Silas and Timothy, went on to the seacoast and stopped in Troas. Here at last his leading became clear. A vision of a man from Macedonia convinced him that it was the will of God that he should preach in the western continent of Europe. The way was opened at once. The winds were favorable. In two days he came to Neapolis. It took him five days to make the return trip at a later time. Paul followed the broad paved way of the Via Egnatia up to the mountain pass, and down on the other side to Philippi. Here he learned that there was no synagogue, but that the little company of Jews gathered for Sabbath worship at a place of prayer about a mile to the west of the city gate on the shore of the river Gangites. It was the site of the old battlefield upon which the empire had been won, and here Paul opened his missionary campaign for the conversion of Europe. A greater conqueror than Mark Antony had come to the old scene of strife, and greater victory was to be achieved. A mightier empire was to be founded than that of the emperor Augustus.

There was only a little company of women worshiping there that day, but their hearts were strangely stirred by Paul's message; and the Lord opened the heart of one woman, Lydia, a seller of purple and a foreigner from Thyatira, to give heed unto the things which were spoken by him.[2] A *man* had summoned Paul to Macedonia in the vision. Paul went to Macedonia and found a *woman* first of all. The man from Macedonia had said, "Come over and help *us*," but the woman who was the first European convert was no Macedonian but an Asiatic, resident there in Philippi simply for commercial purposes. That was only the beginning, however. Others were converted, and a Christian church was founded. Paul and Silas, im-

[2] Acts 16. 14.

prisoned, were released by an earthquake, the Roman jailer and his family were added to the believers, and then the magistrates besought Paul and his companions to leave the town. They had a final meeting with the brethren in the home of Lydia, and departed.[3]

Philip of Macedon had gathered his gold here and laid the solid foundations of the Macedonian supremacy which Alexander extended into a world empire. Paul had gathered greater riches than Philip, and he had laid the foundations of an empire more extensive and more enduring than that of Alexander. It was here that he had his first experience of a Roman scourging and lay for the first time in the stocks of a Roman prison. Yet he went away rejoicing, for he had won the devotion of loyal and loving hearts for himself and his Master. That was worth all the persecution and the pain. Philippi had become world famous again, as the site of the first Christian church on the continent of Europe. Originally it had been called Crenides, "The Fountains" or "The Springs," and now it was to justify that name again, as the fountainhead of European Christendom. That is its greatest historical interest for us to-day.

III. Characteristics of the Church at Philippi

1. It seems to be the least Jewish of all the Pauline churches. There were few Jews in Philippi. No Hebrew names are found in the list of converts in this church mentioned in the New Testament. The Jewish opponents of Paul never seem to have established themselves in this community. There is one paragraph at the beginning of the third chapter of the epistle which seems to be aimed at these, but it is a note of warning against them as possible intruders rather than a direct attack upon those already present. They were likely to appear anywhere among the Pauline converts, but as far as we know they had not cultivated the Philippian field as yet or at least had not had any success there.

[3] Acts 16. 16–40.

2. Women seem to be unusually prominent in the history of this church, and this is consistent with what we know concerning the position accorded to women in Macedonian society. Lydia brings her whole family with her into the church. She must have been a very influential woman, and her own fervor and devotion and generosity and hospitality seem to have been contagious and to have become characteristic of the whole Christian community. Euodia and Syntyche are mentioned in the epistle, two women who were fellow laborers with Paul in the gospel, for both of whom he has great respect, of both of whom he is sure that their names are written in the book of life; but who seem to have differed with each other in some matter of opinion. Paul exhorts them to be of the same mind in the Lord.[4] Good women have made so much trouble in the church. Sometimes it is so difficult for them to see things the same way. Yet the church would never be able to get along without them, though sometimes it seems hard to get along with them. We sympathize with Paul's prayer that the good women of the church may keep at peace among themselves. The prominence of the women in the congregation at Philippi or the dominance of Lydia's influence among them may account for the fact that they seem to have been more mindful of Paul's comfort than any of his other converts were. Possibly the first Ladies' Aid Society in Europe was organized here at Philippi, with Lydia as its first president. They raised money for Paul's support and forwarded it to him again and again. They were anxious that he should have all that was needed. They were willing to give of their time and their means to that end. There seem to have been no theological differences in the Philippian church. That may testify to the fact that the most of its members were women. There is one personal difference, and that is between two women.

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[4] Phil. 4. 2.

3. There were splendid men in the church membership too. Some of them were Macedonians. Hausrath declares that the Macedonians represented "the noblest and soundest part of the ancient world. . . . Here was none of the shuffling and indecision of the Asiatics, none of the irritable vanity and uncertain levity of the Greek communities. . . . They were men of sterner mold than could be found in Asia Minor or languorous Syria. The material was harder to work in, and offered more stubborn resistance; but the work, once done, endured. A new Macedonian phalanx of Pauline Christians was formed here. . . . Manliness, loyalty, firmness, their characteristics in general history, are equally their characteristics in the history of the Christian Church. . . . They were always true to Paul, always obedient, always helpful." [5] Paul rejoiced in them. They were spirits congenial with his own.

Doubtless some of these converts were Roman veterans, trained in the Roman wars to hardness and discipline and loyalty. They were Roman citizens and proud of that fact. When Paul and Silas first had appeared among them they had said, "These men, being Jews, do set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive, *we being Romans*." [6] Afterward Paul and Silas had convinced them that, though Jews, they were just as much Roman citizens as the Philippians themselves; and the doctrines they taught were perfectly consistent with Roman citizenship. In the epistle Paul exhorts them to behave as citizens worthily of the gospel of Christ,[7] and he reminds them that though they were proud of their Roman citizenship—and so was he—they all had become members of a heavenly commonwealth in which citizenship was a much greater boon than even the *Jus Italicum* had been. Later Paul states the fact again, "Our citizenship is in heaven;" [8] and he goes on to remind them that their King is seated there upon the throne and

[5] Hausrath, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 203, 204.
[6] Acts 16. 20, 21.
[7] Phil. 1. 27.
[8] Phil. 3. 20.

that he is coming again to establish a glorious empire, for he has power to subject all things unto himself.

It is to these old soldiers and athletes that Paul addresses his military and gymnastic figures of speech. He informs them that the whole prætorian guard had heard of the gospel through his imprisonment at Rome.[9] He sends them greetings from the saints who are Cæsar's household.[10] He prays that he may hear of them that they stand fast like an immovable phalanx, with one soul striving athletically for the faith of the gospel.[11] He knows that they will be fearless and brave, in nothing affrighted by the adversaries.[12] He speaks of his own experience as a wrestling match, a conflict or contest.[13] He joys in the sacrifice and service of their faith.[14] He calls Epaphroditus not only his fellow worker but his fellow soldier.[15] He likens the Christian life to a race in which he presses on toward the goal unto the prize.[16] He asks the Philippians to keep even, soldierly step with him in the Christian walk.[17] These metaphors have their appeal to an athletic and military race, and they bear their testimony to the high regard which Paul had for this type of Christianity and for those in whose lives it was displayed.

We do not know the names of many of these men, for only Clement and Epaphroditus are mentioned here; but we gather much concerning their spirit from this epistle, and we are as sure as Paul himself that their names are all written in the book of life.[18]

4. If the constituent elements of the church membership at Philippi fairly represented the various elements of the population of the city, they must have been cosmopolitan in character. Philippi was an old Greek city which had been

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[9] Phil. 1. 13.
[10] Phil. 4. 22.
[11] Phil. 1. 27.
[12] Phil. 1. 28.
[13] Phil. 1. 30.
[14] Phil. 2. 17.
[15] Phil. 2. 25.
[16] Phil. 3. 14.
[17] Phil. 3. 16.
[18] Phil. 4. 3.

turned into a Roman colony. It was both Greek and Roman in its characteristics. Christianity had been introduced here by two Jews who were Roman citizens and a Jewish son of a Gentile father. In the account given of the founding of the church in the sixteenth chapter of Acts three converts are mentioned, and one is a Jewish proselyte from Asia, one a native Greek, and one a Roman official. The later converts doubtless represented the same diversity of nationality and the same differences in social position. Yet, apart from those two good women, Euodia and Syntyche, they all were of one mind in the Lord. It is a remarkable proof of the fact that in Christ all racial and social conditions may be brought into harmony and made to live together in peace.

5. They were a very liberal people. First of all, they gave themselves to the Lord and to Paul,[19] and they seemed to think that that giving included their pocketbooks and their property. Whenever they could help Paul or further the work of the gospel they gave gladly and willingly and up to the limit of their resources; and then they hypothecated their credit and gave beyond their power.[20] Even Paul was astonished at their giving. He declares that they gave out of much affliction and deep poverty, and that they were rich only in their liberality.[21] Surely, these are unusual encomiums. The Philippians must have been a very unusual and remarkable people. If the depth of one's consecration and the reality of one's religion are to be measured by the extent to which they affect the disposition of one's material possessions, if one measure of Christian love is to be found in Christian giving, then the Philippians may well stand supreme among the saints in the Pauline churches.

Paul seems to have loved them most. He loved them enough to allow them to contribute toward his support.

[19] 2 Cor. 8. 5.
[20] 2 Cor. 8. 3.
[21] 2 Cor. 8. 2.

Elsewhere he refused any help of this sort, and steadfastly adhered to his plan of self-support while he was preaching the gospel. He made the single exception in the case of the Philippians. He must have been sure of their affection and of their confidence. He knew that they would not grudge their gifts and they never would be suspicious of him in his use of them. He could trust them fully because they trusted him fully. Four times they gave Paul pecuniary aid. Twice they sent him their contributions just after he had left them and gone on to Thessalonica.[22] When Paul had gone still farther to Corinth, and was in want during his ministry there, his heart was gladdened by the visitation of brethren from Philippi, who supplied the measure of his need.[23] It was not a first enthusiasm, forgotten as soon as the engaging personality of the apostle was removed from their sight. It was not merely a personal attachment which prompted their gifts. They gave to their own dear apostle, but only that he might minister to others as he had ministered to them. He was their living link with the work in the mission field.

Years passed by and the Philippians heard that Paul was in the prison at Rome and again in need of their help. Eleven years are enough to make quite radical changes in a church membership; but there seems to have been no change in the loyalty and the liberality of the Philippian church in that time. The Philippians hastened to send Epaphroditus to Rome with their contributions and their greetings. It was like a bouquet of fresh flowers in the prison cell. Paul writes this epistle to thank them that their thought for him had blossomed afresh at the first opportunity they had had.[24]

Paul probably had written them his acknowledgment for

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[22] Phil. 4. 15, 16.

[23] 2 Cor. 11. 8, 9.

[24] Phil. 4. 10, *ἀνεθάλετε*.

each of their other gifts, but his other letters to the Philippians have been lost. Polycarp in his Epistle to the Philippians mentions the fact that Paul had written a number of letters to them.[25] The Philippians not only gave their money to Paul himself but to others for whom he asked it. They knew him and loved him, but they gave to those whom they did not know and whom they had no especial reason to love, simply because he had asked for their contributions. They were a remarkably liberal people. They gave all they could whenever they could. They gave beyond their power, and rejoiced in the privilege. Their poverty did not prevent their giving. The riches of their liberality only flourished in that soil.[26] They gave to their own apostle, Paul; and they gave to those who were not particularly friendly to themselves or to their apostle.

Their astonishingly generous contribution to the poor saints at Jerusalem was something like a contribution raised among the Methodists of Chicago would be, if it were forwarded by their resident bishop to the Archbishop of Canterbury for distribution among the Church of England poor in the city of London. The primate might receive it graciously and he might not. He might recognize the givers as Christian brethren and their representative as a Christian apostle and minister and he might not. There was the same hazard when Paul carried the gifts of the Gentile churches to the Jews at Jerusalem, and we know how ungraciously he was received. The Philippians do not seem to have regretted their generosity in the least. If the carrying of that gift to Jerusalem had landed Paul in jail, it was just another opportunity for them to take up another collection. They hasten to do it with all cheerfulness and with no abatement of their liberality. They were a most remarkable people. No wonder that Paul loved them and was proud of

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[25] Polycarp ad Phil., iii, 2.

[26] 2 Cor. 8. 1–5.

them and made their earnestness and sincerity and affection the measure of comparison with the love of others.[27]

6. They were Paul's favorite church. He never lost any opportunity of visiting them. Six years after his first visit he was resident in Ephesus and having sent Titus to Corinth with a letter to the Corinthians about the reception of which he was very doubtful he appointed a meeting with Titus in Macedonia and probably spent the anxious days of his waiting at Philippi. If he met Titus there, he may have written the Second Epistle to the Corinthians from that city.[28] Paul then returned to Ephesus, and after the riot in that city went over again into Macedonia and made his third visit at Philippi. He probably promised them at this time that he would return to Philippi to celebrate the Easter week with his beloved converts. He went on into Greece, but in three months he is back again, at the festival of the resurrection in the year A. D. 58.[29] We read in 1 Tim. 1. 3 that Paul visited Macedonia after the Roman imprisonment. He enjoyed himself among the Philippians. They were Christians after his own heart. If they were most sincerely attached to him, he was just as sincerely attached to them. He thanks God for their fellowship from the first day until now.[30] He declares that they are his beloved who have always obeyed, not as in his presence only, but much more in his absence.[31] With fond repetition he addresses them as his "brethren," "beloved and longed for," his "joy and crown," his "beloved."[32] Evidently, they were Paul's favorite church, and we can gather from this epistle good reason for this fact.

IV. Characteristics of the Epistle

1. It is a letter. It is not a treatise, as the Epistle to the Romans and the Epistle to the Hebrews and the First Epistle

[27] 2 Cor. 8. 8.
[28] 2 Cor. 2. 13; 7. 6.
[29] Acts 20. 2, 6.
[30] Phil. 1. 5.
[31] Phil. 2. 12.
[32] Phil. 4. 1.

of John are. It is not an encyclical full of general observations and exhortations capable of application at any time and anywhere, as the Epistle to the Ephesians and the Epistle of James and the Epistle of Peter are. It is a genuine letter to personal friends. It has no theological discussions and no rigid outline and no formal development. It rambles along just as any real letter would with personal news and personal feelings and outbursts of personal affection between tried friends. It is the most spontaneous and unaffected of the Pauline epistles. It is more epistolary than any of the others. It is the last of Paul's letters written to a church, and it is written to the first church he had founded in Europe.

2. It is a love letter. All of the other epistles have mixed feelings manifest in them. Sometimes a feeling of grief and of indignation is dominant, as in Second Corinthians. Sometimes the uppermost desire of Paul in his writing seems to be the establishment of the truth and the recalling of the backslider and the strengthening of the believer whose faith has been assailed, as in Galatians and Romans. Always more or less fault is suggested in the recipients of the warnings and exhortations Paul feels compelled to write to them. In Philippi alone there is no fault to be found. The only suggestion of such a thing is in the reference to the difference of opinion between Euodia and Syntyche; and while Paul thinks this ought to be harmonized, he does not seem to consider it any very serious menace to the peace of the church. Aside from this, Paul has nothing but praise for his beloved brethren and prayer that their love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment.[33] He is full of thankfulness upon all his remembrance of them.[34] He rejoices in the privilege of being offered upon the sacrifice and service of their faith.[35]

[33] Phil. 1. 9.
[34] Phil. 1. 3.
[35] Phil. 2. 17.

The church at Philippi may not have been conspicuous in charisms as the church at Corinth was, but it had the fruits of the Spirit in rich measure. Paul seems to think that it needed only to rejoice in its spiritual possessions and to grow in grace and in the mind of Christ. His heart is full of gratitude and love as he writes. His joy overflows as he thinks of them. His peace and his hope are triumphant over present affliction and the prospect of persecution and death. If this is his last will and testament to his beloved church, as Holtzmann calls it, he has nothing to bequeath them but his unqualified benediction. Having loved them from the first, he loves them to the end.

3. It is the Epistle of Joy. It was Bengel who said, "*Summa epistolæ, gaudeo, gaudete*—The sum of the epistle is, I rejoice; rejoice ye." Paul was a man whose spirits were undaunted in any circumstances. He might be scourged in one city and stoned in another and imprisoned in a third and left for dead in a fourth, but as long as he retained consciousness and as soon as he regained consciousness he rejoiced. Nothing could dampen his ardor. Nothing could disturb his peace. In Philippi he had been scourged and cast into the inner prison and his feet had been made fast in the stocks. His back was bleeding and torn; his ankles were swollen and paining him; he could not lie down; he could not sleep. It was too dark in that dungeon for him to see anyone, but he could hear the voice of Silas somewhere near him in that midnight gloom. Some men would have felt depressed under those circumstances, and the prison damp and darkness would have chilled their very souls. It was not so with Paul. He began to sing hymns of praise to God, and Silas joined in. We can imagine that they sang some of the old psalms of confidence in God's presence and power,

> "If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there . . .
> If I say, Surely the darkness shall overwhelm me, . . .
> Even the darkness hideth not from thee,

But the night shineth as the day:
The darkness and the light are both alike to thee."[36]

Then they sang some of the new songs which Luke had collected for the Christian church,

"He will 'grant unto us that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies
Shall serve him without fear,
In holiness and righteousness before him all our days . . .
Because of the tender mercy of our God,
Whereby the dayspring from on high shall visit us,
To shine upon them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death;
To guide our feet into the way of peace.' "[37]

Then an earthquake shook the prison to its foundations and everyone's bonds were loosed and all the doors were opened and down the narrow passageway to the dungeon depth where Paul and Silas had been singing there came the feeble light from the morning star on high; and they knew that their deliverance had come and their sacred concert could close for that time.

Rejoicing in the prison at Philippi, Paul was still rejoicing though he was in prison again at Rome. Some men would have been discouraged by that time. Wherever Paul had gone his preaching had been despised and he had been persecuted. The Jews had slandered him and harassed him and so many of his converts had proven to be fickle and false. The years had gone by and the breach between him and his brethren had widened rather than lessened, and at last they had succeeded in getting him into prison and keeping him there for years. Prison life is never pleasant; and it was far less so in that ancient day than it is now. Paul was such an ardent spirit. It was more difficult for him to be confined than it would be for a more indolent man. He had been the Wandering Jew of church history, he was a world-

[36] Psa. 139. 8–12.
[37] Luke 1. 74, 75, 78, 79.

missionary, a restless cosmopolite, ranging up and down through the continents with the message of the Christ. It was like putting an eagle into a cage to put him into prison. Many eagles mope and die in confinement. Paul was not moping. He was writing this Epistle to the Philippians and saying to them, "All the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel. . . . Therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." [38]

His enemies were free to do and say what they pleased, and they were making the most of the opportunity. He could no longer thwart or hinder them. Some men would have broken out into loud lamentations and complaints. Some men would have worried about the conditions and would have gotten nervous about the outcome of the cause. The faith of even John the Baptist failed in prison. He could not believe that things were going right if he were not there to attend to them. Paul's faith never wavered. His hope never waned. His joy was inexhaustible and perennial. Did he hear the sentry's step pacing up and down the corridor before his prison door? It reminded him of the peace of God which passeth all understanding, guarding his heart and his thoughts in Christ Jesus,[39] standing sentry there night and day. You might as well try to blot out the sunshine of a clear day with ink spots as to get such a man as Paul to whine or worry or be dismayed. If there are ink spots anywhere, the sun shines on in sublime unconsciousness of their insignificant existence. So Paul's rejoicing overflows in sublime indifference to anything and everything which seems adverse to him or his cause.

The keynote of the epistle is, "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice." [40] The gospel is being preached by him even in prison, and the good work is going on outside even through those who think they can afflict him by

[38] Phil. 1. 12, 18.
[39] Phil. 4. 7.
[40] Phil. 4. 4.

their way of doing it. They are very much mistaken. As long as Christ is being preached he is content, whether it is done in exactly his method or not. If his death is imminent, he will rejoice, for to die will be to him great gain. If he is to be permitted to live longer, he will rejoice, for he can be of further service to the Christ and the converts whom he so loves. It was a clear case of "Heads I win, and tails you lose," between Paul and any ill fortune which might befall him. He had learned in whatsoever state he was therein to be content. He knew how to be abased and he knew also how to abound: in everything and in all things he had learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want.[41] Everything which happened to him was for the best. All things worked together for his good.

He had the grace of gratitude for the least of God's gifts. He could have walked with Socrates down the streets of Athens and have joined him with all sincerity in saying, "How many things there are which I can get along without!" He would have sympathized with the grateful spirit of Saint Francis, who with one of the brethren came, worn and weary, into a certain town, where they begged their bread for the love of God, and of whom we read, "When they had done their begging they met together to eat in a place without the city, where was a fair fountain and a fine, broad stone; upon the which each set the alms that he had begged. And Saint Francis, seeing the pieces of bread and the stone and the fountain, could not contain himself for joy, but kept on crying over and over again: 'O brother, we are not worthy of such vast treasure!'" Paul might not have sympathized with the begging, but he would have sympathized with the spirit of thanksgiving, and in similar destitution he would have rejoiced in the abundance of his blessing and have called it a feast.

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[41] Phil. 4. 11, 12.

He was of one spirit with John Wesley, with whom John Nelson traveled in Cornwall and of whom John Nelson writes, "At Saint Ives Mr. Wesley and I lay on the floor: he had my greatcoat for his pillow, and I had Burkitt's Notes on the New Testament for mine. After being here near three weeks, one morning, about three o'clock, Mr. Wesley turned over, and, finding me awake, clapped me on the side, saying, 'Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer: I have one whole side yet, for the skin is off but on one side.' We usually preached on the commons, going from one common to another, and it was but seldom that anyone asked us to eat and drink. . . . As we returned, Mr. Wesley stopped his horse to pick the blackberries, saying, 'Brother Nelson, we ought to be thankful that there are plenty of the blackberries; for this is the best country I ever saw for getting a stomach, but the worst that ever I saw for getting food.' " Some people would have found it difficult to find anything for which to be thankful in such circumstances, but John Wesley was thankful for blackberries, and if Paul had been with him, Paul would have said, "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content."

Henry Boehm was the traveling companion of Bishop Asbury through the American wilderness, and he says: "As Bishop Asbury and I were traveling through the woods we would often stop to refresh both man and beast. The bishop would sit down by a spring of water, take a crust of bread from his pocket, and ask a blessing over it with as much solemnity and gratitude as he would over a table spread with the richest and most plentiful provision. Blessed man! many a time it drew tears from my eyes when I witnessed it; and often, since the good bishop has gone to feast in paradise, I have wept as I have thought upon it." Thanksgiving for pure water and a clean crust! Bishop Asbury could have said with Paul, "I have learned the secret how to be content and how to rejoice both when I am filled

and when I am hungry, both when I abound and when I am in want." Paul rejoiced always.

His experience could be like a sun flower facing the full flood of the sunlight and flaunting its petals on high and laughing and praising its Lord all the day. The sunflower is a courtier of the old school, holding its head high and looking its King full in the face, but with all dignity and loyalty subservient to him in everything. If things went well with Paul, he knew that the Lord was at hand, and he rejoiced in his presence and love; as the sunflower rejoices in the sun. If things went ill with Paul, he was just as sure that the Lord was at hand and he rejoiced that the Lord's will was being wrought out in him and for him and that his own character was being developed and his saintliness was being matured. If need occasioned, his experience could be like a night-blooming cereus, sending forth blossoms from thorny stems and opening out new beauties in the deepest dark and filling even a prison cell with the fragrance of a holy life. He is old and worn and in prison, but he writes this letter to the Philippians, and it is only a short epistle, but some twenty times in the course of it he uses the words, "joy," "rejoice," "peace," "content," and "thanksgiving." It is a love letter and it is full of peace and hope and joy.

4. It is of great importance, theologically. It is one of the paradoxes to which we become almost accustomed in Paul's writings that this simplest of his letters, most epistolary and most personal throughout, should yet contain the fullest and most important putting of the theology of the incarnation and exaltation which ever came from his pen. He has only a practical end in view. He is exhorting the Philippians to humility and he says to them: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself,

becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore God also highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." [42] It is the most theological passage in the epistle. Doctrinally it is one of the most important in the New Testament. It is Paul's final contribution to the solution of the great mystery of the coming of the Saviour and the economy of salvation. It is his last word at any length on this subject. He states plainly the fact of the *kenosis,* the *morale* of the redemption, the certainty of the exaltation, and the sure hope of the universal adoration in the end.

Volumes have been written upon the doctrine of this passage. Others will be written, for here the most vital truths of Christology are clearly stated and definitely formulated for all time. Jesus was a real man, not grasping at any of the attributes of Deity which would be inconsistent with real and true humanity, but in whole-hearted surrender of sacrifice submitting to all the disabilities and limitations necessary to the incarnate condition. He was equal with God, but he emptied himself of the omnipotence and the omniscience and the omnipresence of his preincarnate state and was found in form as a man, a genuine man, obedient to God in all his life. He always maintained that attitude toward God which we ought to maintain and which we can maintain in our humanity, in which he was on an equality with us. We ought to have the mind which was in Christ. He humbled himself and became obedient. He was obedient through life and obedient unto death, yea, even unto the death of the cross. He might have died like Moses on some mountaintop of communion with God. He might

[42] Phil. 2. 5–11.

have died at home with Mary the mother to pillow his head on her arm and with his best friends about him to speak words of comfort and peace in his last hours. He died the most painful and the most humiliating death possible in that age. Cicero declared that crucifixion was too horrible and too degrading a death for any Roman citizen ever to suffer it. However, it was good enough for a provincial and a condemned criminal like Jesus.

There had been no place for him in the inn in the beginning, and at the end there was no place upon the earth where he could lay his head. Lifted up between the earth and the sky, he could not rest his head even upon the hard wood of the cross arm, for it was encircled with a crown of thorns whose sharp points tore his brow and pierced his hair if he rested its weight anywhere. That was the death which he died. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him and given him a crown above all other crowns and the promise of universal sovereignty. We are to enter into mystical union with him. If we suffer with him, we shall reign together. It is a great passage, setting forth profoundest truths in the tersest manner. It is the crowning revelation concerning Jesus. His humiliation was to the uttermost, and in his exaltation he is supreme.

V. Genuineness of the Epistle

The genuineness of the epistle is admitted very generally to-day. It was in the canon of Marcion. Its name occurs in the Muratorian fragment. It is found in both the Peshito and the Old Latin versions. It is mentioned by Polycarp and quoted in the letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne, in the Epistle of Diognetus, and in the writings of Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria. Baur made a determined attack upon its authenticity. He declared that it was not doctrinal and polemical like the other Pauline epistles, and that it was full of shallow imitations of these, and that it had no apparent motive and no connected argu-

ment and no depth of thought. He questioned some of the historical data and suspected Gnostic influence in certain passages. Bleek said of Baur's arguments that they were partly derived from a perverted interpretation of certain passages in the epistle; they partly rested upon arbitrary historical presuppositions; and some of them were really so weak that it was hard to believe that he could have attached any importance to them himself.

It is not surprising that few critics have been found willing to follow Baur's leadership at this point. Biederman, Kreucker, Schwegler, Bruno Bauer, von Manen, Hinsch, Hitzig, Hoekstra, and Holsten may be mentioned among them; and of these Holsten is chief. Of him Schürer said, "The researches of Holsten are full of sagacity; but the reasons alleged by him for denying the genuineness of the Epistle to the Philippians can have no weight, unless we take the apostle Paul (the most living and versatile character the world has ever seen) to be such a slave of rigid routine that he cannot write one epistle that shall not be exactly like all the others, that he can only repeat in each what he has said in the preceding, and in the very same words. If we are not prepared to admit this, all the objections raised against the authenticity of the Epistle to the Philippians fall to the ground." Later he says, "The arguments of Holsten are so foolish that one is sometimes tempted to put them down as slips of the pen."

The genuineness of the epistle has been defended by Weizsäcker, Weiss, Pfleiderer, Jülicher, Brückner, Klöpper, Grimm, Schenkel, Sabatier, Reuss, Resch, Hilgenfeld, Harnack, Holtzmann, Ernesti, Mangold, Lipsius, Lünemann, Renan, Godet, Zahn, Clemen, Davidson, Lightfoot, Farrar, and practically all of the English writers on the subject. Weizsäcker says that the reasons for attributing the epistle to the apostle Paul are "overwhelming." Peake concludes, "Few things in modern criticism are better assured than the authenticity of this epistle, and it may be

accepted without any misgiving." [43] McGiffert declares: "It is simply inconceivable that anyone else would or could have produced in his name a letter in which no doctrinal or ecclesiastical motive can be discovered, and in which the personal element so largely predominates and the character of the man and of the apostle is revealed with so great vividness and fidelity. The epistle deserves to rank alongside of Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans as an undoubted product of Paul's pen, and as a coordinate standard by which to test the genuineness of other and less certain writings." [44] This is the practically unanimous conclusion of modern scholarship.

VI. Place, Date, and Occasion of Writing

This is one of the prison epistles. Paul makes frequent reference to his bonds.[45] He was for two years a prisoner in Cæsarea.[46] Paulus and others have thought that the epistle was written during this imprisonment; but the references to the prætorian guard and the members of Cæsar's household have led most critics to conclude that the Roman imprisonment was the one to which the epistle refers. The epistles to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians also were written during the Roman imprisonment, and these three form a group by themselves. Philippians evidently is separated from them by some interval. Was it written earlier or later than they? Beyschlag, Bleek, Ewald, Lightfoot, Farrar, Moule, Lock, Sanday, Hort, Beet, and others think that the Epistle to the Philippians was written first. These are first-class authorities, and it is with hesitation that we differ with them at this point. We prefer, however, to agree with Zahn, Ramsay, Findlay, Shaw, Vincent, Jülicher, Holtzmann, Weiss, Godet, Saba-

[43] Peake, Introduction to the New Testament, p. 59.
[44] McGiffert, The Apostolic Age, p. 393.
[45] Phil. 1. 7, 13, 14, 17. [46] Acts 24. 27.

tier, Reuss, Lipsius, Gwynn, Klöpper, McGiffert, Moffatt, Bartlet, Bacon, Kennedy, Peake, and others who argue for the writing of Philippians toward the close of the Roman imprisonment. Their reasons are as follows:

(1) We know that some considerable time must have elapsed after Paul's arrival at Rome before he could have written this epistle; for the news of his arrival had been carried to Philippi and a contribution to his needs had been raised among his friends there and Epaphroditus had carried it to Rome. In Rome Epaphroditus had become seriously sick, and the news of this sickness had been carried back to Philippi and the Philippians had sent back a message of sympathy to him. At least four trips between Rome and Philippi are thus indicated, and there are intervals of greater or less length between them. The distance between the two cities was some seven hundred miles. Communication was easy by the Appian Way and Trajan's Way to Brundusium and across the narrow straits there to the Egnatian Way, which led directly to Philippi. There were many making the trip at all times, but the journey would occupy a month at least, and the four journeys suggested in the epistle were not in direct succession.

(2) Paul says that through him Christ had become known through the whole prætorian guard (1. 13). It must have taken some time for this to become possible.

(3) The conditions outside the prison, where Christ was being preached by some in a spirit of love and by others in a spirit of faction, cannot be located in the earliest months of Paul's sojourn in Rome.[47] They must belong to a time when Christianity had developed in the city and parties had been formed in the church.

(4) Luke was well known at Philippi, yet he sends no salutation to the Philippians in this epistle. He surely would have done so if he had been with Paul at the time

[47] Phil. 1. 15–17.

of its writing. He was with the apostle when he wrote to the Colossians, and so was Demas.[48] Now Paul promises to send Timothy to Philippi, and says, "I have no man like-minded, who will care truly for your state." [49] Aristarchus, Demas, Luke are all gone. They all had been with him when he wrote the earlier epistles.

(5) His condition as a prisoner seems to have been changed for the worse. He had enjoyed comparative liberty for the first two years of his imprisonment in Rome, living in his own hired house and accessible to all his friends. He now had been removed, possibly to the guard room of the prætorian cohort. Here he is in more rigorous confinement, almost alone.

(6) Paul writes as if he thought that his case would be decided soon.[50] He seems to be facing his final trial. He is not sure of its outcome. He may die a martyr's death, but he expects to be acquitted and then to be at liberty to do further missionary work. This was not his immediate expectation when he wrote the other epistles, and therefore they would seem to be earlier than this.

(7) The epistle is addressed to all the saints in Philippi, with the bishops and the deacons.[51] These official titles do not occur in any earlier epistles, but they are found in the Pastoral Epistles, which were written still later. Therefore they link the Epistle to the Philippians with the later rather than the earlier epistles.

From these indications we conclude that Paul was nearing his final trial when he wrote this epistle, and that it, therefore, represents the maturest development of his faith and his thought. It was the last of his epistles to the churches. The Pastoral Epistles were written to individuals. Hilgenfeld calls this "the swan song" of the great apostle. In it Paul has written his last exhortations and warnings, his last hopes and prayers for his converts to the Christian

[48] Col. 4. 14.
[49] Phil. 2. 20.
[50] Phil. 2. 20–22.
[51] Phil. 1. 1.

faith. Its date must be somewhere toward the close of the Roman imprisonment, in the years A. D. 63 or 64.

Epaphroditus had brought the contribution of the Philippians to Paul in Rome. He had plunged into the work there and had contracted a malarial fever or some other serious sickness; but his life had been spared in answer to the prayers of Paul and his friends. Now Paul sends him back to Philippi, though he knows that he will be very lonely without him; and he sends with him this letter of acknowledgment of their gift, filled with commendation and encouragement, gratitude and love.

VII. Contents of the Epistle

1. Address (1. 1, 2).

2. Thanksgiving and Prayer (1. 3-11). Paul is thankful for their fellowship and confident of their perfection. He longs for them and prays that their love may be wise to discriminate among the most excellent things and that they may be able to choose the very best, until they are filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and the praise of God.

3. Information Concerning His Own Experience (1. 12-30). (1) *His Evangelism* (verses 12-14). Everything has turned out well. Paul is in prison, but he has been indefatigable in his evangelism. He has been chained to a soldier, but that has given him many an opportunity for personal and private and prolonged conversation. When the people have gathered to hear, the guard has listened perforce; and when the crowd was gone more than once the soldier has seemed curious and interested and they have talked on about the Christ. Paul has told his experience over and over to these men, and his story has been carried through the whole camp. Here was a new sort of prisoner, a man who was suffering only because of his faith, and that faith was in a crucified Prophet whom he believed to have been resurrected from the dead and to have appeared

to himself and to have made him a new man. The soldiers watched him from day to day and concluded that he was an honest man and a very good man who never lost his temper under any provocation, but who was patient and peaceful and pure all the time. They never had known anyone like him. They began to believe, some of them, that he taught the divine truth and that he had a supernatural strengthening in his spiritual life. Not only had the gospel found unexpected furtherance inside the prison walls, but through the whole city the brethren had been emboldened by Paul's success to preach Christ, some through faction and envy and strife and some through love.

(2) *His Tolerance* (verses 15-18). Paul rejoices that Christ is preached whether by his enemies or by his friends. He would much prefer to have the gospel presented as he himself preached it, but he was great-souled and broad-minded enough to tolerate differences of opinion and method among brethren in Christ. Roman Christianity never was preeminently of the Pauline type. This initial impulse away from the Pauline forms of doctrine and practice culminated after the centuries in that Roman Catholicism against which Martin Luther made his protest. Protestantism and Roman Catholicism for the most part have been at swords' points ever since. It is time now that we go back to the noble tolerance of the apostle Paul and recognize the fact that, with all the differences between us, it still may be true that we all preach Christ, and therefore are brethren, and therefore ought to rejoice in each other's success. This is one of the noblest utterances of one of the greatest of men. "In every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."[52] Paul is sorry that everybody does not see things just exactly as he does, but he rejoices if they glorify Christ and would not put the least hindrance in their way.

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[52] Phil. 1. 18.

(3) *His Readiness for Life or Death* (verses 19-26). Paul says: "Give me liberty or give me death; it will be Christ either way. To live is to work for Christ; to die is to be with Christ. To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Here is Paul's soliloquy in the face of possible martyrdom or further missionary labor. We are reminded of Hamlet's soliloquy in Shakespeare. "To be or not to be: that is the question" with both Hamlet and Paul. Hamlet decides that to end the heartache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to is a consummation devoutly to be desired, but then he pauses to think what dreams may come in that sleep of death. He thinks that it would be gain to die if it were not for the dread of something after death, the undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns. He is in a strait betwixt the two, having a desire to depart; but uncertain whether it would be better to bear the ills he has than fly to others that he knows not of. That is the trouble with Hamlet. He is uncertain about the future and he is weighing the woes he has over against the possibly greater woes to come. It is a choice between evils with him. For him to live is misery and to die is to be more miserable. Now, contrast Hamlet with Paul.

Paul might make as long a list of personal grievances as Hamlet could. Surely, he knew the heartache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to. In that Roman prison he felt the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, the pangs of disprized love, the law's delay, the insolence of office, and the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes. He knew and felt these things as keenly as any; but here in his soliloquy he is not counting up the sorrows of life, but life's blessings! He is weighing the blessings of life over against the blessings of death, and he is finding it difficult to decide between the two. There is no uncertainty about death or his condition after death with him. He will be with Christ, and that is very far better; but he can be more helpful to his brethren here. To be or

not to be: that is the question, and Paul decides, like Hamlet, in favor of longer life. Hamlet comes to that decision because his conscience had made him a coward. Paul comes to that decision because his missionary spirit is ready for the supreme sacrifice in behalf of his friends. The supreme sacrifice is not in martyrdom for the cause; that would be easy and a consummation devoutly to be desired. The supreme sacrifice is the sacrifice of daily service in continued missionary labors. The aged apostle would rather die than live; but he would rather live than die before his work was done.

Hamlet's soliloquy led to his continued inaction. The native hue of his resolution was sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought, and enterprises of great pith and moment had their currents turned awry and lost the name of action. Paul's soliloquy ends with the resolution that he will continue the great enterprise to which his life has been devoted and that he will rejoice in being offered upon the sacrifice and service of the Philippians' faith. He has sacrificed everything to the cause, all the promising prospects of the Jewish rabbi, all the comforts of home and the enjoyment of his study and his ease; and now he is willing to sacrifice what he conceives to be the greatest blessedness, that of being with Christ in bliss, if he can be of further service to his friends. Hamlet weighs evils against evils and chooses the lesser evils in pure cowardice in the end. Paul weighs blessings against blessings, the blessings of life for Christ and the blessings of death with Christ, and chooses the lesser blessings in pure unselfishness in the end. They both choose life, but the motives of their choice are radically different; and Paul lives with rejoicing while Hamlet lives in despair and in shame.

(4) *His Example* (verses 27-30). Paul was a Roman citizen, and so were they. He tried to live worthy of his citizenship, and so must they. He had a still higher ambition, that he and they might live as citizens worthy of the

gospel of Christ. He fought as a good soldier; he stood fast in the faith; he was in nothing affrighted by the adversaries. Let them follow his example. They were engaged in the same conflict. To them it had been granted not only to believe but also to suffer in the behalf of Christ. Their faith was not of themselves; it was the gift of God. Their suffering was not self-chosen; it too was a gift of God.

4. **Exhortation to Follow the Example of Christ** (2. 1-18). *Jesus Persuaded by Love.* He had the continuous fellowship of the Spirit. He was characterized by tender mercies and compassions, lowliness of mind and thought for others. He humbled himself through life and was obedient unto death by crucifixion. He worked out his own salvation with fear and trembling, for it was God who worked in him for his good pleasure. He was blameless and harmless, the Son of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. He was the light of the world, holding forth the word of life. Let the Philippians have his mind and spirit, and Paul will rejoice to pour out his life as a libation upon the sacrifice and service of their faith. Let these things be done by them, and Paul says, "I joy, and rejoice with you all: and in the same manner do ye also joy, and rejoice with me." "He recalls to our minds the runner who, at the supreme moment of Grecian history, brought to Athens the news of Marathon. Worn, panting, exhausted with the effort to be the herald of deliverance, he sank in death on the threshold of the first house which he reached with the tidings of victory, and sighed forth his gallant soul in one great sob, almost in the same words as those used by the apostle, *χαίρετε, χαίρομεν*—Rejoice ye, we too rejoice!" [53]

5. **Reasons for Sending Timothy and Epaphroditus to Them** (2. 19-30).

6. **Paul's Example** (3. 1-21). (1) *In the Repudiation of*

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[53] Farrar, Messages, p. 305; compare Lightfoot, *ad loc.*

all Confidence in the Flesh (verses 1-7). There are certain dogs and evil workers who belong to the old Jewish persuasion who glory in the flesh. Paul does not. He glories in Christ Jesus and has no confidence in the flesh. He has much reason to be proud of his past. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. No one could find fault with his legal righteousness. He claimed to be blameless as judged by their standard. Here is his record. Who has any better one, in pedigree or in piety? All of these things Paul counts but loss for Christ.

(2) *In the Maintenance and the Pursuit of Spiritual Perfection* (verses 8-16). The word "perfect" is used twice in this paragraph. We read, "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on." Many of the greatest preachers and some of the best authorities among the commentators quote these words as indicative of Paul's humility in disclaiming any present perfection of character while he avows his purpose to strive on toward perfection as long as he lives. Such an interpretation is wholly aside from Paul's thought. He is not talking about perfection in patience and peace and devotion and character. That perfection he claims for himself and the Philippians in this paragraph toward the close, "Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded." The perfection of which he speaks earlier is not perfection of character but perfection of nature, the perfection possible in the resurrection life of the saints in bliss. He has not attained unto the resurrection from the dead and is not perfect with the perfection of heaven. That is the goal of his endeavor. He presses on to that mark.

In the meantime he maintains that perfection of consecration and of faith which results in present Christian perfection of character and which is the only guarantee of that perfection to be revealed to those who attain unto the resurrection from the dead. Here he maintains the perfection of the racer, who strives for perfect physical condition and

singleness of aim and utmost of effort as he speeds toward the goal. There he will have the perfection of rest and reward. A careful reading of the context makes it perfectly clear that Paul has no thought of disclaiming anything possible in his present state, as perfection of motive and effort, of spirit and life surely is, but only that perfection to which he aspires in the life that is to come. To that he has not yet attained. To that he presses forward with all hope and strenuous endeavor, knowing that some time he will reach the goal in glory. He keeps himself in perfect condition now. He maintains his perfect faith and hope. Some time he will be rewarded with the perfection of heaven.

(3) *In Heavenly Citizenship* (verses 17-21). Paul harks back to his own example again. His citizenship is in heaven. He walks with his mind on heavenly things. There are those who mind earthly things. They are the enemies of the cross, but he has sworn eternal allegiance to the cross. Their end is perdition, while his end is sure salvation. Their god is the belly, while his goal is the perfection of the spirit. Their glory is in their shame, while his glory is in Christ alone. "Brethren, be ye imitators of me, and mark them that so walk even as ye have us for an ensample. Then the Lord shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, the body of our earthly pilgrimage, the body that so often fails the racer to the goal and cannot keep up with the desire of his spirit, and shall conform it to the body of his glory, the perfect body of those who have attained to the resurrection of the dead." It is not "our vile body" which is to be changed. That is a sadly misleading translation in the Authorized Version of to-day. The body is not vile; and the Bible nowhere says that it is. That was Manichean or Neo-Platonic heresy, that matter is evil and the body is vile. Plotinus blushed that he had a body; Jesus never did. The Christian will honor the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. Archbishop Whately was dying, and

his chaplain read this passage to him, and he read, "Who shall change our vile body." "Stop," said the Archbishop, "not 'vile body,' if you please, but the body of our humiliation."

It is the body which clogs and confines the wings of the spirit, which binds us to the earth, which hinders us on every hand, which wearies when we are most anxious to work, which fails us when we most need our strength, which limits our achievement by sheer weakness and incapacity. It was the vehicle of the incarnation, and we honor it for that. A body was prepared for Jesus, but it was the body of his humiliation. In it he suffered pain of heart and pain of flesh. He wearied in long journeyings, he fainted with hunger, he felt the need of refreshment in sleep. He labored sometimes until his friends thought he must be beside himself, but he came to the limit of his physical strength at last and was compelled to steal away into the solitudes for rest. His back was bruised and bleeding in the end and he could not bear the heavy cross; but that back had been bent beneath heavy burdens all his life long. His brows were pierced with the sharp points of the thorns; but those brows had been racked with pain again and again in his ministry. His feet were nailed fast to the heavy beam of the cross tree; but before that they had been so weary oftentimes that he scarcely had been able to lift the one after the other. He went about doing good as far as he could and as long as he could, but, like the ball and chain about the convict's feet, his body had been the clog upon his endeavor, a constant source of suffering and cause of limitation. It was the body of his humiliation, from which he was freed at the moment of his resurrection.

Thereafter he could be where he chose when he chose and was superior to all physical laws in his appearances and his disappearances. The body of his glory was the perfect instrument for the fulfilling of his spirit's behest. It was no longer subject to material limitations. It no longer

wearied and suffered pain. It was the body of his exaltation, perfectly adapted to all the spirit's requirements and perfectly satisfying all the spirit's needs. Paul says that our bodies are like the body of Jesus of Nazareth now, and they shall be like the body of our risen Lord after a while. The body of our humiliation will be conformed to the body of his glory in due time.

7. A Series of Short Exhortations (4. 1-9). This series ends with the command, "The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do; and the God of peace shall be with you." All the preceding exhortations, then, are based upon his own conduct and experience and example. They had seen the embodiment of these things in him. They were to be imitators of him in their obedience to them. Therefore as we read them we have sidelights thrown upon the character of the apostle who had taught and preached and practiced these things. What do they tell us concerning the apostle Paul?

(1) *His Steadfastness and his Love for His Friends* (verse 1). He had a genius for friendship. He bound his friends to him with chords of steel. They were ready to sacrifice anything for him. The reason for that was that he sacrificed everything for them, and that he had such an overflowing love for them that his love begat love in them.

We recall what Adolph Saphir said of Paul's affection: "Paul seems to me to have had a thousand hearts. He loved each church as if it were the only one he possessed. He felt their burden, he rejoiced over their order, steadfastness, and gifts; he ceased not to give thanks for them, and to pray for the blessing and help which each of them needed; he remembered the names of their saints, he watched over them with the affectionateness of a tender mother and nurse. While he seems lost in the contemplation of divine truth, soaring like an eagle far above vale and mountain-peak, and gazing with steadfast eye into the brightness of the sun, he is always like his blessed and dear Lord, who in homely but

most touching language compares himself to a hen gathering her chickens under her wings.

"In all Paul's epistles we feel the warm breath of affection; we hear the voice tremulous with emotion, we see the earnest and loving countenance of the fatherly man. Even when he writes to the Romans, whom he had never seen, he says, 'I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, that ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.' What can exceed his tender love to the churches of Thessalonica and Philippi? or the soul-stirring expostulations which in anguish of mind he addresses to the Galatians, of whom he travails again in birth, that Christ may be formed in them? How fatherly, how considerate, how exquisitely delicate and sensitive is he in his treatment of the Corinthian church! In all his epistles he continually interrupts the doctrine with the expression of his love, his anxiety, his joy and sorrow; we see his heart bound up in the churches." [54] No wonder they loved him. They could depend upon him always, for he stood fast in the Lord. His was no shallow love, easily exhausted. His was no fickle friendship, soon forgetting those left behind. They knew his steadfastness and they could count upon it. He was faithful. He would be true.

(2) *His Sympathies and Desires* (verses 2, 3). His sympathy was with all good men and all good women, and his desire was that they live in peace. It may be that we have four proper names in this passage. Euodia and Syntyche are the two women mentioned, and the name of Clement follows later. It is possible that Paul perpetrates a pun here, as he does in the Epistle to Philemon. There he plays upon the meaning of the proper name, Onesimus, Profitable in meaning but un-profitable in Philemon's experience. If we can believe that he is doing the same thing

[54] Saphir, The Epistle to the Hebrews, I, pp. 191–193.

here, we can read, "I beseech thee also, Syzygus by name and Syzygus, yokefellow, by nature, help these women." This seems possible, but a staggering objection to it is that this proper name "Syzygus" has not been found in any literature or in any inscriptions, and that is not true of the other names here.

It is a little puzzling to all the commentators to decide who this true yokefellow is upon whose aid Paul calls at this juncture. Clement of Alexandria and Origen thought that Paul was addressing his own wife in these words, and Renan thinks it was Lydia to whom Paul had become married since her conversion at his first visit. The trouble with these suggestions is that the Greek adjective is masculine and cannot refer to any woman. Who, then, is the man who is Paul's true yokefellow? Lightfoot and Hofmann follow Victorinus in thinking that Epaphroditus is meant; but he is with Paul at the time of writing and would not be addressed in the epistle. Others have suggested Barnabas, Luke, Silas, Timothy. Rückert says Paul is addressing his own brother. Wieseler thought that the yokefellow was Christ. Baur said he was Peter. If there is no proper name here, no one knows who this true yokefellow was. Epaphroditus and Clement and the members of the church at Philippi may have known, when the letter was received, whom Paul was addressing, but that knowledge perished with them; and the wild guesses made by critics and commentators since simply testify to our absolute ignorance at this point.

(3) *His Constant Rejoicing in the Lord* (verse 4). Paul's joy was unceasing and unquenchable. It was wholly independent of outward circumstances. Its source was not to be found in the finite; and like its source it was unchanging and infinite.

(4) *His Sweet Reasonableness* (verse 5). It was so called by Matthew Arnold. Tyndale translated "courtesy." Cranmer called it "reasonableness." It is a combination of for-

bearance and graciousness, of modesty and courtesy, of consideration and esteem such as was characteristic of Christ and will be manifest in the life of every true follower in his footsteps. Paul had it. He was a true gentleman in his dealing with everybody, and especially in his conduct toward the aged and the suffering and the weak. He was not overbearing or arrogant. There was a sweet reasonableness about him which made his personality a most winning and attractive one.

(5) *His Freedom from Anxiety* (verses 6, 7). Paul's fearless confidence was born, on the one hand, from his sense that the Lord was at hand, and, on the other, from his faith in prayer. In nothing could he be anxious if the Lord was at his right-hand. All things were possible through the strength given by him. And, again, all things were possible to believing prayer. As long as God was a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God, why should any child of God be anxious about anything? Did anything happen which would cause his heart to beat in alarm if he were unprotected and alone? The peace of God was pacing sentry up and down before his heart and no alarming thing could enter there without being challenged and robbed of all its terrors before it was allowed to pass to him. Did anything occur which would throw him into mental confusion if he had to rely on his own strength of intellect and quickness of wit alone? The peace of God was pacing sentry before all his thoughts and he never could be taken off his guard as long as that faithful watcher remained at his post. It passed all understanding how Paul was kept from all anxiety. It was the power of prayer which did it. It was the peace of God which did it. It was the Lord at hand who did it.

(6) *His Habitual High Thinking* (verse 8). All that was worthy in the ideals of the Greek philosophers Paul made the staple of his thought. He never was fascinated by plausibility or deceived by sophistry. He demanded always to know what was true. He reveled in the august. He was

at home in the heights. He delighted in that which was honorable and reverend, sanctioned by the ages and the generations, tried and true. He never could be content with anything short of just measure in dealings with God and with man. His theology was not sentimental or sickish or soft. It had adamant in it. It was founded upon the rock of immutable justice and truth. He abominated anything which was unclean. He would not tolerate anything which was shadowed or stained. He loved that which was crystal-clear and diamond-pure, flawless, taintless, whole. He hated the least remnant of dirt and of filth in morals or in thought. He believed in the beauty of holiness. He believed that really lovely things never were diseased or evil at the root. He preferred to think upon the things which were of gracious bearing and of good report. He knew that virtue was in these things and that all praise belonged to them. He had learned that while his mind was filled with these things he lived in serenity and peace. The peace of God kept guard over him. The God of peace kept pace with him.

8. **Thanks for Their Gift** (4. 10-20). He rejoiced that their thoughtfulness for him had blossomed forth again. It had come into his prison cell like the fragrance of fresh roses. He had been initiated into all the mysteries of Christian patience in tribulation and rejoicing in suffering and contentment in everything. He had matriculated in the School of Christ. He had learned much from his Master. He could do all things in Him that strengthened him. They were the only ones with whom he had opened a debit and credit account. He was indebted to them for four contributions now—three sent to Thessalonica and Corinth and one to Rome. He believed that their generosity was well-pleasing to God, and God would supply every need of their souls according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To him be glory. Amen.

9. **Salutations** (4. 21, 22).

10. **The Benediction** (4. 23). This is not a theological epistle, and therefore it is not an especially Christological one. Yet we count the name of Christ forty-two times in this short letter, and the pronouns referring to him are many more. Paul cannot write about anything without writing about Christ. He ends, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." The spirit of Christ and the grace of Christ are in the entire epistle.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

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I. The Name

The Pastoral Epistles are addressed to Titus and to Timothy, who have been left in charge of churches by the apostle Paul. He takes occasion to counsel them concerning the administration of church affairs, and since so large a portion of their contents have to do with pastoral duties and responsibilities, the epistles have been called the Pastoral Epistles. This name was applied to them for the first time by Anton in 1753 and Wegscheider in 1810 and by Eichhorn in 1812, and since their day it has come into general use. It is not an altogether appropriate name, however, for Paul as he wrote seems to have had in his thought the churches which these men served as well as the men themselves, and the epistles take on a half-public character. They are addressed directly to individuals, but they include much in their material which is of interest to the general church and which has been of service to all the Christian centuries.

II. Objections to Their Pauline Authorship

The genuineness of these epistles has been questioned more widely than that of any of the other epistles ascribed to Paul. The reasons for this questioning are found mainly in the facts mentioned in the epistles themselves, in their style and their doctrine, and in the ecclesiastical and heretical developments which they presuppose. We will look at these in order.

1. We can find no place anywhere in the narrative of the book of Acts into which we can fit the historical and bio-

graphical data furnished us in these epistles. The attempt has been made more than once to suggest a time in Paul's missionary career as outlined in the book of Acts when these events could have taken place, but the general impression is that any suggested date involves improbabilities and impossibilities, and therefore for the most part such attempts have been given up. (1) A voyage to Crete is suggested in Titus 1. 5, in which Paul was accompanied by Titus. Titus is not mentioned in the book of Acts at all, and nowhere in that book are we told of any missionary campaign by Paul in Crete. (2) In Titus 3. 12 we read that Paul intended to spend a winter in Nicopolis. That intention surely never was carried out at any time during the missionary journeys detailed in Acts. (3) Timothy and Paul are in Ephesus together and Timothy is left in charge there while Paul goes into Macedonia (1 Tim. 1. 3). When Paul left Ephesus to go into Macedonia in Acts 20. 1 Timothy accompanied him (Acts 20. 4), and we have no hint in the narrative that Timothy was left in charge of the church there at any time. (4) In 2 Tim. 4. 20 Paul is giving Timothy the news of his journey to Rome, and he tells him that Trophimus had been left at Miletus sick. In the book of Acts when Paul visits Miletus with Trophimus he is on his way to Jerusalem and not to Rome, and he did not leave Trophimus there sick, but took him with him, and it was the fact that Trophimus had been seen in his company which helped to set afloat the rumor that Paul had taken Trophimus into the temple with him and so defiled the holy place; and that rumor started the riot which ended in Paul's imprisonment (Acts 21. 29). (5) In the same passage in Timothy Paul says that Erastus remained in Corinth. In the book of Acts Timothy is a member of Paul's company after he leaves Corinth for the last time, and that was two or more years before Paul's imprisonment in Rome began. Paul would not be likely to write to Timothy about what happened years before, and he would not need to write to

Timothy the things which Timothy already knew. (6) In 2 Tim. 4. 13 Paul asks Timothy to bring with him the cloak and the books which had been left with Carpus at Troas. This epistle evidently is written at the end of an imprisonment at Rome, and that would mean, according to the narrative in Acts, that these things had been left by Paul for an interval of several years before he had asked for them; and that, while possible, does not seem likely. In the dungeon at Rome he would have needed that cloak at once, and Paul would not be without books any longer than was necessary wherever he might have leisure to use them. These are samples of the difficulties we encounter when we try to find a place in Luke's account of Paul for the circumstances presupposed in the Pastoral Epistles. Many think that they cannot have been written by Paul because, according to the book of Acts, Paul never was in these situations.

2. These epistles are inferior in literary merit to the other epistles of Paul. Davidson declares that they are "without vigor, point, spiritual depth, or richness." McGiffert suggests that they are too loose and illogical to have been written by Paul. He says that in the Pastorals, "and especially in First Timothy, we have for the most part a mere collection of detached passages, betraying a writer largely lacking in the directness, incisiveness, and grasp which were so characteristic of" the apostle.[1] Many think that this difference of style as compared with the other Pauline epistles marks a difference of authorship.

3. The Pastoral Epistles have notable peculiarities of words and phrases not found in any of the other Pauline epistles. (1) We are told that in First Timothy there are seventy-four words not used elsewhere. In Second Timothy there are forty-six, and in Titus forty-eight. This means that between four and four and a half per cent of the words used in these epistles are new and peculiar words as com-

[1] McGiffert, The Apostolic Age, p. 401.

pared with the previous Pauline vocabulary.[2] Another authority estimates that in the thirteen chapters of these epistles there are one hundred and seventy-one words used nowhere else in the New Testament—an average of thirteen to the chapter.[3] Among the new words we notice (*a*) the first occurrence of the word "neophyte" in the New Testament in 1 Tim. 3. 6. (*b*) The author of these epistles writes about the devil. Paul always said "Satan," with two exceptions—Eph. 4. 27, and 6. 11. (*c*) The term used in these epistles for the second coming is "epiphany." Paul's term is "parousia." (*d*) The word "piety" never is found in the other Pauline epistles, and it is found only five times in the rest of the New Testament—in Second Peter four times and in Acts once; but in these Pastoral Epistles it occurs eleven times, and nine times in First Timothy alone. (*e*) "Sound doctrine" is repeatedly emphasized here and nowhere else in the Pauline epistles. (*f*) In the salutations of these epistles a new and third term is introduced. Instead of the "grace and peace" of the other Pauline epistles we have here, "grace, mercy, and peace." (2) Among the new phrases we notice, (*a*) the phrase found only here in the New Testament and therefore characteristic of the Pastoral Epistles, "Faithful is the saying." (*b*) Another characteristic phrase is "God the Saviour." It occurs here six times, and is not to be found in any of the other Pauline epistles. It occurs only twice elsewhere in the New Testament—2 Pet. 1. 11, Jude 25. These new phrases and this new vocabulary are thought by some to betoken a new authorship.

4. There are noticeable differences in theology. (1) These epistles are more utilitarian than the previous Pauline epistles are. Paul has been called the apostle of faith and James the apostle of good works. Something of the same contrast could be drawn between the Pauline epistles

[2] Book by Book, p. 152.

[3] Findlay, The Epistles of Paul, p. 214.

and the Pastoral Epistles. There justification by faith and regeneration by the Holy Spirit were fundamental, and here piety and good works are emphasized. (2) Faith in the Pauline epistles was a subjective experience. In the Pastoral Epistles it is more objective in character. The more profound conception has given way to the more commonplace satisfaction with morality and faithfulness to a creed.

5. These epistles represent a degree of development in the organization of the church which marks them as belonging to a later stage of church history. Their author is more concerned about church organization than Paul ever seemed to be. It has been held that the emphasis upon officialism and the hierarchical tendencies manifest here belong to a later age than that of Paul.

6. We used to be told that the doctrine of these epistles was aimed at the Gnosticism of the second century, and many still think that the growth of error indicated here is too rank to fall within the time of Paul.

7. It has been objected further that Paul would not have written to Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth" (1 Tim. 4. 12), and he would not have called him "my child" and "my child Timothy" (1 Tim. 1. 18; 2 Tim. 2. 1), and he would not have exhorted him to "flee youthful lusts" (2 Tim. 2. 22), because Timothy must have been about thirty-five years old at this time. He was no child and no youth, but a man grown. McGiffert thinks that "the instructions which Paul gives, and the warnings and exhortations which he addresses to Timothy and Titus, are of a kind entirely suited to immature and untried disciples, or to the common multitude of Christians, but certainly not at all suited to men such as they had proved themselves to be. The author instructs them, especially Timothy, in regard to the most elementary duties of the Christian life and the most elementary truths of Christianity; he warns them against vice and lusts, and urges them repeatedly to be honest, faithful, sober, and pure, as if he were greatly in doubt not

only as to their official but also as to their private character." [4] McGiffert concludes, therefore, that Timothy and Titus in these epistles are simply lay figures through whom the pseudonymous author addresses the church at large.

8. In Acts 20. 25 Paul is bidding farewell to the elders of Ephesus and he tells them, "I know that ye all shall see my face no more." If we recognize the genuineness of First Timothy, we must deny the truth of his prophecy, for in First Timothy we find a visit to Ephesus implied (1. 3) which must have been subsequent to this farewell at Miletus, and they did see his face again.

9. If Paul had just been at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1. 3) and was hoping to return there in a short time (1 Tim. 3. 14), there was no need of his writing any letter. He could have told Timothy all these things by word of mouth when they were together.

These are the principal objections made to the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles, and those who are convinced by them believe that these epistles were written by some one other than the apostle Paul at a date much later than his life, and that Paul's name was attached to them to give them authority, or possibly because there were genuine fragments of Pauline epistles about which these longer epistles were built up. As they stand now they are either partly or wholly forged in Paul's name. We will look at these objections in order and see whether they can be answered satisfactorily.

III. Answers to These Objections

1. It is true that the facts of these epistles cannot be harmonized with the narrative found in the book of Acts. If we are limited to the data concerning the life of Paul furnished us in that book, we must conclude that the Pastoral Epistles are not genuine. However, there is no necessity for our feeling thus limited. Paul may have been released

[4] McGiffert, *op. cit.*, pp. 399, 400.

from the Roman imprisonment in which the book of Acts so strangely and so abruptly leaves him, and if he were released, then all the events found in the Pastoral Epistles may have taken place just as they suggest and the Pastoral Epistles themselves may be genuine. Granting the possibility of Paul's liberation and longer life, we can believe in the genuineness of these later epistles; but Paul's liberation must be assumed. Weiss concludes: "It can neither be proved nor denied on historical grounds. . . . If the Pastoral Epistles are to be pronounced genuine, they can belong only to a period of the apostle's life lying beyond that with which we are acquainted" through the book of Acts and the other Pauline epistles. "The possibility remains that the Pastoral Epistles are the sole monuments and evidences of a life period subsequent to the first Roman captivity that have come down to us." [5] We agree, then, with the objection as stated, that the facts suggested in the Pastoral Epistles cannot find a place anywhere in the narrative of the book of Acts, but we refuse to believe that the question of the genuineness of the epistles is thus closed. We are disposed to think that a place can be found for them after the end of Luke's narrative.

2. We are ready to agree, again, that these Pastoral Epistles are inferior to the other epistles of Paul in literary merit. However, we do not concede that that fact necessarily settles the question of their genuineness. On the contrary, it seems self-evident to us that no writer always is at his best, maintaining a continuously high level of excellence, and in these private letters to personal friends Paul could not be expected to be as careful in composition as when he was writing to great churches. A recent writer has well declared that this whole method of criticism "really postulates that a writer must always preserve the same dull monotone, or always confine himself to the same transcend-

[5] Weiss, Introduction, I, pp. 387, 388.

ent heights. He must never break out in a new direction, never descend to the valleys or the busy scenes of common life; above all, he dare not widen his thoughts with the process of the suns, or differ from the utterances of his early days. He must see and say everything at once; having had his vision and his dream, he must henceforth be like a star and dwell apart. It is not permissible, having been grave, ever to be gay, or gay, ever to be grave. To be stereotyped is his only salvation. Thus do the men of the midnight oil understand the men of action and life. On such principles there is not a writer of note large parts of whose sayings and doings could not be proved to be by some one else. It cannot be conceived that the author of 'Sordello' could ever have written the simple lyric of 'Evelyn Hope'; or that the mind that produced 'In Memoriam' could sink to the bathos of

> Old Year roaring and blowing,
> And New Year blowing and roaring.

Burns could not have written half the poems attributed to him, for there are 'radical and inexplicable differences' in the very nature of the poet who wrote 'Tam o' Shanter,' as compared with the other poet who wrote 'To Mary in Heaven.'"[6] As long as these variations in style are so apparent in contemporary writers we can well believe that any such variation would be possible in the apostle Paul.

3. We are not impressed much either with the argument from the peculiar words and phrases. It may be true that the Pastoral Epistles "have twice as many unusual words as any other of Paul's, and three times as many as most;" but what of it? There are peculiar words in all the Pauline epistles—in Romans, one hundred and eleven; in First and Second Corinthians, one hundred and eighty-six; in Galatians, fifty-seven; in Philippians, fifty-four; in Colossians and Ephesians together, one hundred and forty-three. It is

[6] Shaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 483, 484.

natural that a man's vocabulary would increase with the years, and this seems to have been the case with Paul. In First and Second Thessalonians there are five peculiar words to the chapter, in Philippians ten to the chapter, and in the Pastoral Epistles, thirteen. In different writings of the same author the variation in the number of unusual words is sometimes as great as three to one. In the Irving edition of Shakespeare a list of the peculiar words is given at the end of each play and the proportion of these words to the page varies from 3.4 to 10.4, a variation of more than three to one. In Professor Masson's edition of Milton he shows that Milton in L'Allegro uses only ten per cent of non-Saxon words, while in the sixth book of Paradise Lost he uses twenty per cent, and in other places even thirty per cent, another variation of more than three to one. Paul is in good company, then, as far as the proportion of variation in his vocabulary in the Pastoral Epistles is concerned. It is no greater than that found in other great authors.

Reuss has pointed out the fact that the two Epistles to the Corinthians contain as many words not found in Romans and Galatians as the Pastoral Epistles contain of words not found in all the other letters of Paul. Paul was a genius. His mental horizon always was widening. His vocabulary continually was enriched. The Greek language had an inexhaustible wealth of material, and Paul was appropriating more and more of it to the service of his Christian missionary labors. He was not content with any stock of stereotyped formulæ. He had new things to proclaim and he put them into new words and new phrases. Mentally and spiritually he was progressive and his increasing vocabulary is an evidence of that fact. Therefore the very peculiarities of these Pastoral Epistles, instead of being a proof of their ungenuineness, may well be considered a proof of their Pauline authorship.

Who but Paul himself would have added that word "mercy" to the salutation? A forger would have been very

careful to make no change in the usual Pauline formula. Who but Paul himself would have called Paul the chief of sinners? Would any forger have dared to do that? One cannot but feel that any argument from literary peculiarities is always a most precarious one, since these can be paralleled in the different writings of the same author in so many instances in both the ancient and the modern times, and since so many attempts to identify anonymous authorship by means of the internal phenomena in our own day have gone so strangely awry. We conclude that these peculiarities in the Pastoral Epistles prove nothing against the Pauline authorship. They are perfectly possible with a man of such active brain and versatile genius as that of Paul.

4. The differences in doctrine are more apparent than real. Paul emphasizes the necessity of good works in all of his epistles. He never was a mere theorist. He always insisted on a practical application of the doctrine he presented. A new meaning given to the word "faith" would not prove that Paul did not so use it. In his Commentary on Romans Sanday tells us that we must distinguish between at least seven different senses given to the word "faith" in that one epistle, and he says that "Paul has all these meanings before him; and he glances from one to another as the hand of a violin-player runs over the strings of his violin." [7] It would not be strange, then, if in the course of the years Paul should add still another meaning to his list, and that the subjective faith of which he wrote in Romans should become objectivized and crystallized into a creed in the Pastorals.

5. The ecclesiastical organization represented in the Pastoral Epistles may be a more developed one than that of the earlier epistles. It is but natural that it should be. Affairs were moving very fast in these beginning days.

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[7] Sanday, Commentary, pp. 33, 34.

They were creative days in every department of church life. There were no stereotyped forms to be maintained. The church was at liberty to establish any institution or office which seemed likely to serve its present need. However, the organization represented in these epistles is not that of the second century. Bishops and presbyters are synonymous here. They were distinguished from each other in the second century.

6. It cannot be proven that the doctrine of these epistles is aimed at second-century Gnosticism. There are certain Gnostic terms here—"æons," "gnosis," "antitheses"—but they are used here in a vague and general sense unlike the definiteness of their meaning in the second century, and it would seem more probable that the Gnostics had borrowed these terms from these epistles and had developed and defined them in their later use. Error grows rank in the time of these epistles, but that is true in any generation, and it surely cannot be argued that it is peculiar to any earlier or later age.

7. Paul was an old man, and to a man sixty-five years of age anyone who is only thirty-five always will seem young; and Timothy *was* young to be set over elders in such a responsible position as that in the church at Ephesus. If Paul calls Timothy a youth, he is only following the custom in the Roman world to which they both belonged, for by the Romans boys were called children until they were seventeen years old and youths until they were forty-six. At Rome itself forty-three was the legal age for a consulship. Timothy had been converted when he was sixteen, and had accompanied Paul on his missionary journeys while still a lad, and Paul never would get over the feeling that his youth and inexperience was in need of constant supervision and fatherly advice.

8. When Paul says, "I know that ye shall see my face no more" (Acts 20. 25), he is not uttering an infallible prophecy but is expressing his individual conviction. He feels per-

fectly sure about it, but it does not follow that it will be infallibly fulfilled. In Phil. 1. 25 Paul says, "I know that I shall abide, yea, and abide with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith; that your glorying may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my presence with you again." Is this an infallible prophecy? Was Paul liberated from the Roman imprisonment and did he visit Philippi again and abide with the disciples there for some time? If this utterance is a proof of these facts, then the chief objections to the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles go by the board. How about that other statement made by Paul before Agrippa—"King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest"? [8] Was King Agrippa a believer? Not in the sense that Paul was, surely. In all these passages Paul is simply asserting his own profound conviction. He would be the last to claim that his conviction carried with it any infallible certainty of fulfillment.

9. We are not sure that Paul had been with Timothy in Ephesus just before writing First Timothy. That is an inference from 1 Tim. 1. 3, and all that we are told there is that Paul had exhorted Timothy to tarry in Ephesus when he himself was going into Macedonia. He may have sent that exhortation to Timothy by letter from almost any point in Asia Minor or Greece. In 1 Tim. 3. 14, 15 we learn that Paul hoped to visit Timothy shortly in Ephesus, but that it was altogether uncertain whether he would be able to do so, and in the possibility that he may tarry long or not be able to come at all he writes his letter, that Timothy may know how to behave himself in the house of God. Since the past visit is so doubtful and the future one so uncertain, neither would seem to be any bar to the possibility of the genuineness of the epistle.

What shall we say, then, at the end of this discussion? No objection brought against these epistles seems to us to

[8] Acts 26. 27.

be in any degree a decisive one. With any predisposition to believe in the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles any or all of the objections to them will fail to convince. On the other hand, it seems equally clear that with any predisposition to doubt their genuineness no satisfactory argument can be advanced in favor of them. As far as the internal phenomena are concerned there can be no certainty in either way. There are great difficulties barring a conclusion either for or against. Weiss says, "Since the apostle's release from the Roman captivity cannot be proved by any historical evidence from these epistles if they are not genuine; and since their genuineness can only be proved on the assumption that this release did take place, it must be conceded that we have here a circular proof that does not admit of a definite scientific decision." [9]

We are not surprised, therefore, to find that the authorities differ widely in their conclusions at this point. The following decided against the genuineness of the Epistles: Baur, Beyschlag, Davidson, Hatch, Hilgenfeld, Holtzmann, Jülicher, Mangold, Meyer, Schenkel, Schwegler, Weizsäcker. The following are ready to recognize that certain fragments of the Pastoral Epistles are genuine and have been interpolated in these later productions. Of course the decisions as to the exact extent of the interpolations are various, but in this class of mediating critics we may number Bacon, Clemen, Credner, Ewald, Harnack, Hausrath, Hesse, Hitzig, Immer, Krenkel, Knoke, Lemme, McGiffert, Moffatt, Peake, Pfleiderer, Renan, Réville, Sabatier, Strachan, von Soden. The genuineness of the epistles as a whole has been ably defended by Adeney, Alford, Barth, Baumgarten, Beck, Bernard, Bertrand, Bowen, Conybeare and Howson, Cramer, Dods, Dubois, Fairbairn, Falconer, Farrar, Findlay, Gilbert, Godet, Gloag, Good, Guericke, Herzog, Hofmann, Hort, Humphreys, Huther,

[9] Weiss, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

James, Knowling, Lange, Laughlin, Lightfoot, Kölling, Macpherson, Plummer, Plumptre, Planck, Purves, Otto, Ramsay, Salmon, Sanday, Schaff, Shaw, Steinmetz, Spitta, Wace, Wieseler, Wiesinger, Weiss, Van Oosterzee, Zahn.

IV. Conclusions

In the lack of direct historical evidence we can arrive at only tentative conclusions. The following seem to us to be the probabilities in the case:

1. Paul was liberated from the Roman imprisonment of which we read in the book of Acts. Some reasons may be adduced for this supposition. (1) In Josephus we read of a great shipwreck at about this time in which many Jews were drowned. It is possible that Paul's accusers were on their way to Rome in this ill-fated vessel and that the case against him collapsed with their disappearance and consequent failure to appear against him. Of course we cannot be sure of this. (2) Even if the case came to trial, we can be sure that the testimony of Festus and Agrippa and Lysias and Julius would be favorable to Paul, and this Roman testimony would be likely to outweigh any counter charges on the part of the Jews. (3) Possibly the best reason for supposing that Paul was released is to be found in his own confident expectation of that event of his trial. He writes to Philemon to prepare him a lodging, for he hopes that through the prayers of his friends he shall be granted unto them.[10] He writes to the Philippians that he knows that he will abide in the flesh and be present with them again.[11] Something must have happened to give Paul this assurance of his liberation. He seems to have no doubt about it, and in the absence of all other information this assurance may in itself furnish a presumption of the fact. (4) To this presumption we may add the general tradition in the early church to the same effect. Clement of Rome in the first

[10] Philem. 22.

[11] Phil. 1. 25, 26.

century wrote that Paul, having come to the limit of the West, suffered martyrdom.[12] We know that Paul intended to make a journey to Spain,[13] and this testimony of Clement generally is supposed to witness to the fact that he finally was enabled to fulfill this intention. The Muratorian fragment, about A. D. 170, mentions Paul's journey to Spain, but the sentence is incomplete and we cannot be sure of the whole of it. Eusebius, in the fourth century, says, "There is a tradition that the apostle after his defense again set forth to the ministry of his preaching, and having entered Rome a second time was martyred."[14] Jerome and Chrysostom, in the fifth century, followed by Theodoret and many of the Fathers, tell us that Paul preached in Spain. We think that these testimonies from the early days must have had some ground for their existence; and if they represent the fact in the case, the Pastoral Epistles may well be a proof of Paul's later missionary labors. With Paul in Spain and Crescens in Gaul and Titus in Dalmatia, it is evident that the missionary map of the world was changing very rapidly in these days. Its frontiers were being extended westward, northwestward and northeastward from Rome. New territories were being invaded and new realms won for the conquering Christ.

Nearly all the English writers agree that Paul was released from the first Roman imprisonment, and had another period of missionary activity. Alford, Ellicott, Lewin, Lightfoot, Conybeare and Howson, Farrar, Plumptre, Wordsworth, Findlay, Salmon, Shaw may be mentioned among them. Bleek, Ewald, Gieseler, Godet, Lange, Neander, Renan, and Zahn also hold to a second imprisonment at Rome, with an aftermath of missionary labor preceding.

2. The Pastoral Epistles are genuine. (1) There is not

[12] Clement, ad Corinth, c. 5.

[13] Rom. 15. 24.

[14] Hist. Eccl., II, 22.

a particle of historical evidence to be adduced against them. A single authoritative statement to the effect that Paul was martyred at the close of the first Roman imprisonment would dispose of the question. There is nothing of the sort. (2) The internal evidence is rather in favor of the Epistles than against them. Would any forger have written these epistles and have assigned them to a period when Paul was known not to have been in existence? Would any forger have filled them with so many details concerning individuals and events? Twenty-three members of the church are mentioned in Second Timothy. No other portion of the New Testament is so crowded with personal details. A forger would have avoided all such things. Their presence in these epistles affords a presumption of their genuineness. (3) The external evidence is as satisfactory as we could expect. It is represented by Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, the Muratorian Canon, and the Peshito. Zahn says, "Traces of their circulation in the church before Marcion's time are clearer than those which can be found for Romans and Second Corinthians."[15] Dean Alford says, "There never was the slightest doubt in the ancient church that the Epistles to Timothy and Titus were canonical and written by Paul." De Wette declares, "These epistles are as well attested by external or historical evidence as the other epistles of Paul." Findlay says the same thing: "The witness of the early church to their place in the New Testament canon and their Pauline authorship is as clear, full and unhesitating as that given to the other epistles."[16] Weiss agrees: "The external attestation of the epistles is quite on a par with that of the other Paulines."[17] Bishop Vincent concluded his study of this subject by saying: "The work of no ancient classic author has such strong

[15] Zahn, Introduction, II, p. 85.
[16] Findlay, Epistles, p. 213.
[17] Weiss, *op. cit.*, p. 411.

external and internal proof of its genuineness. The topography which is recognized, the opinions and social conditions of the times, both in the church and in the world, the object of the writing, the theme discussed, the utter weakness of the impeachment, the weight of testimony from ages, all sustain the claim as to Paul. We may be sure that these epistles are not a fraud." [18]

3. The Pastoral Epistles were written, First Timothy and Titus in the year A. D. 67, from some place in Asia Minor or Macedonia not now to be fixed upon with any certainty, and Second Timothy in the year 68 from Rome.

V. Timothy

1. **His Early History.** Probably he was born in Lystra. His father was a Greek and he gave his son a Greek name. The mother was a Jewess either by race or by faith. Her name was Eunice and her mother's name was Lois. In some manuscripts of the Western text she is called a widow, and it may be that Timothy's father died in his early youth. The mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois, instructed Timothy in the Old Testament Scriptures,[19] and he was at home in the Holy Book from his youth up. Those two devout women gave the boy a religious training and put their impress upon him for life.

2. **His Relationship to Paul.** Paul found Timothy at Lystra on the first missionary journey, and the lad, probably only sixteen or seventeen years of age at this time, was converted. He seems to have become active at once in the Christian propaganda and to have been well known in the Christian communities at Lystra and Iconium. When Paul came to Lystra on the second missionary journey John Mark had just failed him and he had parted company with Barnabas on this account, and he and Silas needed an attendant to take John Mark's place. They found Timothy

[18] Iliff School Studies, p. 159.

[19] 2 Tim. 3. 15.

well reported of in all this region, and Paul asked him to become their traveling companion in their further missionary labors. It must have been a great sacrifice for the widowed mother and the old grandmother to send forth their cherished child into all the inevitable hardships and sufferings of the missionary career, but they were willing to make the sacrifice, as so many mothers and grandmothers have been willing since.

Paul seems to have been drawn to Timothy from the very first, and Timothy gave to Paul all the hero worship and personal devotion of which a boy's heart is capable. Paul circumcised him and he was ordained to the missionary ministry.[20] This ordination was an impressive occasion. Timothy made his confession of faith in the presence of many witnesses.[21] The prophetic spirit fell upon many and prophecies were uttered, ratifying the choice of Timothy and predicting his good warfare for the Christ.[22] The presbyters laid their hands upon him.[23] Paul followed, and as his hands rested upon Timothy's head the boy was filled with the Holy Spirit, and its power and love and discipline remained with him through life.[24] Thereafter no name is associated more closely and continuously with that of Paul than the name of Timothy.

He went with Paul and Silas to Philippi, helped them to organize the church at Thessalonica, was left at Berea when Paul went to Athens, rejoined Paul there, and was dispatched to Thessalonica again, returned to find Paul in Corinth, helped establish the church there, and later labored with Paul in the establishment of the church at Ephesus and the evangelization of all Asia from that center. From Ephesus he was sent to Macedonia and to Corinth on a delicate and difficult mission, in which he seems to have failed to bring about all the desired results. He rejoined

[20] Acts 16. 3.
[21] 1 Tim. 6. 12.
[22] 1 Tim. 1. 18.
[23] 1 Tim. 4. 14.
[24] 2 Tim. 1. 6, 7.

Paul in Macedonia and accompanied him to Corinth, and when Paul started on that last journey to Jerusalem Timothy was with him; and in the book of Acts he is mentioned last at Troas.[25] We learn from the epistles of the Roman imprisonment that Timothy was with Paul at Rome. Paul hoped to send Timothy to Philippi from Rome.[26] At the time of the writing of the Pastoral Epistles Timothy is in Ephesus, representing Paul there and in charge of the church. In the second imprisonment in Rome Paul sends for Timothy to come to him at once. Timothy doubtless obeyed this summons, and it may have been at or after Paul's martyrdom in the Eternal City that Timothy himself was thrown into the prison from which he was released at about the time of the writing of the Epistle to the Hebrews.[27]

As a child serveth a father so did Timothy serve Paul in the furtherance of the gospel.[28] The childless apostle had found in him a son after his own heart, and he made full proof of his fidelity through twenty years of constant fellowship and service. Paul calls him his true child in faith,[29] his beloved child,[30] his beloved and faithful child in the Lord,[31] his brother and God's minister,[32] his fellow worker,[33] working the work of the Lord even as he himself did.[34] Paul joins Timothy's name with his own in the superscription of First and Second Thessalonians, both of the epistles in the first group, of Second Corinthians in the second group of epistles, of Philemon, Colossians, and Philippians in the third group; and Timothy is directly addressed in two of the three epistles in the fourth or Pastoral group. No other name is so honored. Paul and Timothy are associated forever as sun and satellite, though

[25] Acts 20. 4, 5.
[26] Phil. 2. 19.
[27] Heb. 13. 23.
[28] Phil. 2. 22.
[29] 1 Tim. 1. 2.
[30] 2 Tim. 1. 2.
[31] 1 Cor. 4. 17.
[32] 1 Thess. 3. 2.
[33] Rom. 16. 21.
[34] 1 Cor. 16. 10.

Paul prefers to represent the relationship as that of son and father.

3. **His Character.** Possibly Timothy was an only son. He probably was reared by two women who shielded him and cherished him as their greatest hope and joy. He was something of a mother's boy, petted but not spoiled. He seems to have had a delicate constitution and probably was brought up by hand. His stomach was weak and he frequently was sick.[35] He naturally was timid and shrinking in disposition. He was apt to be fearful,[34] and he needed to be encouraged with the thought of the presence and the gift of God.[36] He disliked to be despised and felt keenly the obloquy which attended the ministry of the word of the crucified Nazarene.[37] He clung to the apostle Paul as a tower of strength, and shed bitter tears of affection and grief and foreboding and fear when he had to part from him. He had little self-confidence, and he was afraid of being overborne by impudent, brazenfaced opponents whom Paul could manage without any difficulty, but before whom he was disposed to shrink in self-distrust. He was so timid as to seem irresolute and an easy prey to any domineering, arrogant opposing personality. He was appalled by the hardness and the coldness of the prevalent heathenism and discouraged by the worldliness and the hopelessness of the great masses of the population.

Paul was an inspiration to him and kept his courage up, but he was afraid of himself when he was left alone. Yet it is to Timothy's great credit that he was faithful to every commission and loyal to every command. Though he might go with fear and trembling, he went. It is the highest proof of courage to obey when the heart fails and the body rebels and the mind shrinks from its task, and love and loyalty compel these unwilling servants to do the master's will. Timothy was by nature a coward, but by grace a

[34] 1 Cor. 16. 10.
[35] 1 Tim. 5. 23.
[36] 2 Tim. 1. 7.
[37] 1 Cor. 16. 11; 2 Tim. 1. 8.

hero of the faith. Paul could depend upon his faithfulness and unselfishness at all times. He said: "Timothy is the slave of Jesus Christ. I have no man like-minded. He seeks not his own but the things of Jesus Christ."[38] Paul was disposed to think that he was too humble sometimes, and that he overestimated the disability of his youth while underestimating the real worth of his character and his experience in the missionary field. His love never failed. That was the reason Paul loved him. He might have his disabilities, but he had faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of these was his love. He had found the more excellent way, and he walked in it through all his life.

4. **Tradition as to His Later History.** Eusebius tells us that Timothy was the first bishop of Ephesus.[39] He is said to have remained here until he was martyred for interfering with a heathen feast. Constantius removed his bones to Constantinople. He has been sainted in the Greek, Armenian, Coptic, Maronite, and Latin churches; and in the latter his death is commemorated on January 24.

VI. The First Epistle to Timothy

1. **Its Occasion.** Paul and Timothy had been together recently, but when Paul went into Macedonia he had exhorted Timothy to tarry in Ephesus to counteract some strange teaching there and to maintain church order and discipline.[40] Some time had passed by and Paul now writes to Timothy to encourage him in his work and to remind him of some of the things he had said to him before their parting. He gives Timothy many homely hints as to his personal conduct and as to his dealing with various classes of people and the general management of the church affairs.

2. **Its Advice Concerning the False Teachers.** The teachers of strange and different doctrine are described in

[38] Phil. 1. 1; 2. 20, 21.
[39] Hist. Eccl., III, 4, 6.
[40] 1 Tim. 1. 3.

such general terms that we cannot identify them at this distance. Timothy, of course, knew all about them. He had first-hand knowledge, acquired at short range. Paul did not need to be more explicit in writing him about them. Some of their general characteristics are apparent in the epistle, and they are such as have been reproduced again and again in the church. They understand neither what they say, nor whereof they confidently affirm.[41] They talk loudly and yet are utterly ignorant. Confident asseveration is characteristic of the fool. The wise man recognizes the limits of his own understanding. The ignoramus is the man who arrogates to himself infallibility. Then these people talk about matters of idle questioning and disputes of words.[42] They were supremely interested in things of no moment and wasted their time and the time of others in wrangling over verbal differences. They were disputatious and vociferous, matching the poverty of their thought with the fluency of their speech. To Paul all their contention seemed only profane babbling,[43] and old wives' fables.[44] It was unprofitable to listen to them and it was still more unprofitable to dispute with them. They were ignorant sciolists, set in their own opinions; and it was hopeless to attempt to set them right. They were willing to make money out of the exploitation of their peculiar fancies, and under a show of godliness they were on the watch for gain for themselves.[45] They were making trouble and stirring up strife. They were corrupt in mind and bereft of the truth. They were prone to envy and evil surmisings. They were given over to wranglings and bitter accusations.[46] They were great nuisances, and Paul's advice to Timothy is that he refuse to be drawn into any debate with them and that he avoid all their speculations while he maintains and proclaims the sound doctrine committed to his trust.

[41] 1 Tim. 1. 2.
[42] 1 Tim. 6. 4.
[43] 1 Tim. 6. 20.
[44] 1 Tim. 4. 7.
[45] 1 Tim. 6. 5.
[46] 1 Tim. 6. 4, 5.

It is good advice for all ministers, young and old, to-day. So many sectarians stand for some small issue in defense of which they are belligerent in season and out of season. There are so many independent and fraudulent champions of strange ideas always on hand, seeking to corrupt the minds of the devout and to replenish their own pocketbooks with aggressive and persuasive speech. The best thing to do with them is to let them alone. The one thing that they cannot endure is to be ignored. They are supremely interested for the most part in what Marcion called *indeterminabiles quæstiones*. There is nothing to be gained by bothering with them. We have enough to do with the presentation of the truth. Let error look after itself. When the light is let in upon them the rats run for their holes. Where the truth is preached it commends itself to the upright in heart and the errorists who thrive upon opposition languish and die under the steady and persistent preaching of the truth. Nothing will hurt them more than the ignoring of their presence and effort, except the relentless prosecution of our own work.

Does anyone desire to stir up dissatisfaction in the community by declaring that the divine grace is to be enjoyed exclusively through the established channels of an apostolic succession and the sacraments of the one only properly constituted church? Let him go ahead with his preaching. We will evidence the possession of divine grace outside his imagined established succession, and we will preach the unmediated priesthood of every individual believer in Christ. Does anyone care to maintain that a partial application of water in the baptismal ceremony is a proof of the spirit of partial obedience to the command of the Lord, and only a total immersion will meet the demands of the case? Let him maintain it, and we will preach that no ceremony is essential to salvation and that our devotion to the Master is independent of the application of material water in any degree in any ritual service to our physique. Does anyone

insist that the advent of the Lord is imminent and is he imperative in his demands that we hear and accept his interpretations of prophecy? Let him talk, and we will preach that the faithful performance of our daily duty is the best and the only preparation we need make for the appearance of our Lord. Do the Secularists and the Spiritualists and the Theosophists and the Christian Socialists and the Christian Scientists swarm on every hand, and are multitudes led away by their enthusiasms and vagaries? We have two things to do: first, we take heed to ourselves, that we may be an ensample to them who believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity; and then, second, we give heed to our teaching, that there be nothing in it contrary to the sound doctrine, but that it be according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which was committed to our trust. We will be diligent in these things; we will give ourselves wholly to them, for in doing these things we shall save both ourselves and them that hear us.[47]

3. **Some Characteristics.** (1) This is a rambling letter, with no attempt at logical sequence of thought. It is partly personal and partly official, partly addressed to the dear child who had been Paul's companion and trusted friend for so long a time and partly to the official head of the church where Paul had labored longest and in which he was most interested. Timothy is Paul's son and the Ephesian district superintendent. Paul writes now to the boy and now to the budding bishop. There is no structural unity in the epistle. Paul has many things on his heart and he sets them down just as they occur to him.

(2) Walter Lock says, "The epistle is full of the thought of the salvation of all mankind, the consecration of all creation."[48] Paul writes, "I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men. . . . This is good and acceptable in the

[47] 1 Tim. 4. 12–16; 1. 11.

[48] Hastings's Bible Dictionary, iv, p. 769.

sight of God our Saviour; who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.[49] . . . We have our hopes set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe." [50]

(3) This is "the first handbook of Christian and church discipline." It sets the highest standard of morality and purity for all church officials. It shows clearly that church order and discipline are in no way inconsistent with individual freedom and spirituality.

VII. Titus

Titus never is mentioned in the book of Acts. All that we know of him we learn from the references to him in the other Pauline epistles and in the epistle directly addressed to him. He was a Greek,[51] and apparently a heathen Greek, who was converted to Christianity under the preaching of Paul. Paul calls him his "true child." [52] He seems to have had the least connection with Judaism of any of the missionary evangelists mentioned in the New Testament. Timothy was half-Jewish by birth. Luke probably was a Gentile, but he may have been a proselyte to Judaism before he became a Christian. To all appearances Titus came right out of the heart of heathenism into the Church of Christ. His principal missions were to the predominantly Gentile church at Corinth and to the church at Crete, where it was his business to stop the mouths specially of the vain talkers among those of the circumcision.

He was living at Antioch some fourteen years after Paul's conversion, and Paul and Barnabas took him with them to Jerusalem, where over his person the question was fought out as to whether an uncircumcised heathen would be recognized as a brother in good standing in the Church of Christ. Titus was a Christian, and a good one, but he was not circumcised, and he never had had any connection with the

[49] 1 Tim. 2. 1–4.
[50] 1 Tim. 4. 10.
[51] Gal. 2. 3.
[52] Titus 1. 4.

Jewish Church. The question was whether he ought to be recognized as a Christian when he could not be recognized as a Jew. Could any man come into the church and maintain good standing there if he did not enter by the gate of Judaism? Paul thought he could, and Titus thought he could; and the question was discussed, and the men of repute decided that Titus need not be compelled to be circumcised. The decision was made for all time.[53] The gospel was for the uncircumcised as well as for the circumcised, for the heathen as well as for the proselytes, for out-and-out Gentiles as well as for thoroughgoing Jews. Titus was the man whose case settled that question for all the ages to come. Thereafter he was one of the tried and trusted companions and servants of the apostle Paul.

He seems to have been well known in Galatia, and he may have accompanied Paul on parts at least of the second missionary journey. He was with Paul at Ephesus and he probably carried Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians from Ephesus to Corinth. He seems to have succeeded where Timothy had failed. Apollos had declined absolutely to undertake the commission. Titus went at once and met all the difficulties of the situation with the skill of a master, and Paul was rejoiced to hear his report later in Macedonia that the tangled affairs at Corinth had been straightened out and all now was ready for his own coming there. He carried the second letter to the Corinthians and finished the good work he had so well begun, so that when Paul came later he was enabled to enjoy his stay in Corinth in comparative peace. Some years pass by in which we hear nothing of Titus, and then from this Epistle to Titus we learn that Paul and he had been laboring together in Crete, and that when Paul was called away he had left Titus in Crete to appoint elders in the churches and establish the Christians there in doctrine and discipline.[54] Later Titus was sent

[53] Gal. 2. 1–5.

[54] Titus 1. 5.

on a mission to Dalmatia.[55] Tradition says that Titus returned later to Crete and that he was bishop of the church there, living a celibate life to an extreme old age. He died at ninety-four and his body was buried at Gortyna, but many centuries later his head was carried away by the Venetians and it is preserved now among the relics at Saint Mark's Cathedral in Venice.

Titus evidently was a choice spirit, a stronger character than Timothy and of tougher fiber than Apollos. He was tactful, firm, trustworthy, an able administrator, and a faithful friend. He could take care of himself anywhere. He could accomplish the impossible. He was vigorous and efficient. He was a brother to Paul, a kindred soul, capable, courageous, successful wherever he was sent. Paul relied upon him in extreme cases, and his energy and ability proved him worthy of all the confidence Paul placed in him.

VIII. Crete and the Cretans

Crete is the largest island in the eastern Mediterranean. It is one hundred and forty miles long and fifty miles wide. In its most flourishing period it had a dense population. Ptolemy, Strabo, Virgil, and Horace speak of its hundred cities, and the ruins of many of them still can be seen on the island. Here King Minos formulated his laws, and later tradition said that Titus was his lineal descendant. Crete was one of the most celebrated republics of ancient times. The Romans conquered it in B. C. 69, and it was made a part of a Roman province. It was taken by the Saracens in the ninth century. A century later it was recaptured by the Christians. In 1645 it was attacked by the Turks with a fleet of four hundred ships and an army of sixty thousand men, and after a thirty years' war they captured it, and since 1675 it has belonged to the Ottoman empire. The Cretans had a general bad reputation among the ancient peoples. They were jealous and quarrelsome

[55] 2 Tim. 4. 10.

among themselves, but they usually were ready to unite against any common outside foe. Our term "syncretize" comes from the Greek word[56] which was derived from this circumstance.

According to the ancients "the three worst K's" were the Kretans, the Kappadocians, and the Kilicians. Paul quotes a current proverb concerning them: "One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons." Then he adds, "This testimony is true." The quotation is from the Περὶ Χρησμῶν of Epimenides, a poet with the reputation of a seer who was a contemporary of Solon and lived in Crete about B. C. 600. The syllogistic puzzle of the ancient schools, called "the liar," was founded on this line. It ran endlessly thus: Epimenides said that the Cretans were liars; but Epimenides was a Cretan; and therefore Epimenides was a liar; therefore when he said that the Cretans were liars he did not tell the truth, and the Cretans are not liars; but Epimenides was a Cretan, and then he told the truth when he said the Cretans were liars—and so on. Among the ancients "Cretizing" was a synonym for "lying;" and the Cretans were said to be greedy and gluttonous and drunken and sensual. Paul exhorts Titus to reprove them sharply for these things; and he seems to think they are far from hopeless, for he expects Titus to found churches among them of those who shall be the heirs of eternal life.

They were a mixed population of Greeks and Asiatics, indolent, superstitious, untrustworthy; yet Paul thought them worthy of evangelization and then of careful training in the way of truth and life. We are told that at Pentecost certain of those from Crete were present.[57] They may have carried the news of that experience home with them and thus have been the founders of Christianity in the island. Paul had seen Crete on his voyage to Rome and

[56] *συγκρητίσαι.*

[57] Acts 2. 11.

he had advised that the vessel winter there.[58] The storm had driven them away at that time, but Paul may have had opportunity enough to study the situation and to realize the need of oversight and organization of the Christians there. Thirty years had passed since Pentecost and there were congregations of professing Christians in every city in the island. Paul and Titus now had visited them together, and Titus had been left to set things in order. Zenas and Apollos were about to visit Crete, and Paul seizes the opportunity to write a short letter to Titus. He tells Titus that he will send Artemas or Tychicus later and when either comes Titus must hasten to Nicopolis to meet Paul there.

IX. The Epistle to Titus

Luther said of it, "This is a short epistle, but yet such a quintessence of Christian doctrine, and composed in such a masterly manner, that it contains all that is needful for Christian knowledge and life." There is little of doctrinal importance in the epistle, but it has two rather remarkable passages:

1. *The Epiphany of Grace.* "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works."[59] Van Oosterzee says of this passage that "it is one of the *loca classica* for biblical theology, and one of the comparatively few places in the Pastoral Epistles which furnish important contributions to our knowledge of the doctrinal system of Paul. We here find most perfectly fused together, and penetrating each,

[58] Acts 27. 7–12.

[59] Titus 2. 11–14.

faith and life, doctrine and duty, theory and practice." It has been suggested that this passage might serve as a table of contents for the entire New Testament. "The Epiphany of Grace" might be an appropriate title for the Gospels and the book of Acts. The instructions in holy living well represent the contents of the epistles. The waiting for the coming of the Lord describes the attitude and the spirit of the Apocalypse. The closing clauses summarize the whole intent of the New Testament revelation—redemption from iniquity and purification and piety. Our past redemption, our present duty, and our future hope are all in this one sentence. It is one of the most comprehensive statements of Christian truth ever made by man. It alone would make this epistle memorable for all time.

2. The other passage is concerning the *Philanthropy of God*. "When the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he poured upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."[60] Farrar says of these two passages: "Which of all the Fathers of the first or second century was in the smallest degree capable of writing so masterly a formula of Christian doctrine and practice as is found in 2. 11-14, or the perfectly independent yet no less memorable presentation of gospel truth with a completeness only too many-sided for sects and parties—in 3. 5-7? Will anyone produce from Clemens, or Hermas, or Justin Martyr, or Ignatius, or Polycarp, or Irenæus—will anyone even produce from Tertullian, or Chrysostom, or Basil, or Gregory of Nyssa—any single passage comparable for terseness, insight, or mastery to either of these? Only the inspired wisdom of the great-

[60] Titus 3. 4–8.

est of the apostles could have traced so divine a summary with so unfaltering a hand. If the single chorus of Sophocles was sufficient to acquit him of senility, if the thin unerring line attested the presence of Apelles, if the flawless circle of Giotto, drawn with one single sweep of the hand, was sufficient to authenticate his workmanship and approve his power, surely such passages as these ought to be more than adequate to defend the Pastoral Epistles from the charge of vapidity." [61]

3. In the closing directions to Titus, the name of Zenas the lawyer appears; and it is worth noticing that in these Pastoral Epistles the three learned professions thus are represented as united in the work of Christian evangelism, Paul and Apollos the theologians, and Luke the physician, and Zenas the lawyer laboring together in this field.[62]

4. Lewin calls our attention to the rather remarkable fact that the four intimate friends of Paul mentioned in Titus 3. 12, 13 all derive their names from Hellenic deities—Zeus, Artemis, Tyche, and Apollo.[63]

X. Pauline Autobiography in the Pastoral Epistles

If we conclude that the Pastoral Epistles are genuine, we may regard them as valuable historical sources and we may learn from them many items of interest concerning the closing events in the life of Paul. Let us glance at these in order. Paul was released from the first Roman imprisonment, according to his expectation when he wrote Philemon and Philippians. He may have gone straight to Spain, but we read here that he visited Asia Minor and Crete and Macedonia. He sent the First Epistle to Timothy to Ephesus and the Epistle to Titus to Crete. He spent the winter at Nicopolis in Thrace. He was again in Macedonia and was arrested again at Troas in Mysia. He was taken

[61] Farrar, Life of Paul, pp. 662, 663, note.

[62] Titus 3. 13.

[63] Lewin, Life of Paul, II, p. 344.

to Ephesus where Onesiphorus was kind to him.[64] He bade farewell to Timothy and left him weeping bitterly.[65] At Miletus Trophimus was sick and was left behind. Erastus remained in Corinth when they passed through that city.[66]

Luke, the faithful physician and friend, went on with Paul to Rome. There Paul was put into a dungeon, where it was difficult to find him; but Onesiphorus sought him out and was again kind to him.[67] Here in this imprisonment, so different from the first, many deserted him. Phygelus and Hermogenes were among the first to turn away.[68] At last Demas forsook him, having loved the present world.[69] Crescens was sent to Gaul and Titus to Dalmatia and Tychicus to Ephesus. Only Luke was with him.[70] Paul stood before Nero alone. He was saved from the lion's mouth at the first hearing.[71] He was remanded to prison for a short interval before his martyrdom, and in this crisis of his affairs he writes the Second Epistle to Timothy. It is an urgent epistle. Paul would see Timothy once more before he dies. He urges him to come at once: "I am longing to see thee."[72] "Haste to come quickly."[73] "Haste to come before winter."[74] "The time of my departure is come."[75]

XI. The Second Epistle to Timothy

It is the last letter of the apostle Paul. Salmon says of it, "The impression left upon my mind is that there is no epistle which we can with more confidence assert to be Paul's than the Second to Timothy."[76] Then there must

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[64] 2 Tim. 1. 18.
[65] 2 Tim. 1. 4.
[66] 2 Tim. 4. 20.
[67] 2 Tim. 1. 16, 17.
[68] 2 Tim. 1. 15.
[69] 2 Tim. 4. 10.
[70] 2 Tim. 4. 10–12.
[71] 2 Tim. 4. 17.
[72] 2 Tim. 1. 4.
[73] 2 Tim. 4. 9.
[74] 2 Tim. 4. 21.
[75] 2 Tim. 4. 6.
[76] Salmon, Introduction, p. 41.

be an especial interest in reading the final words of so great a hero of the faith. Paul was the greatest of the apostles, one of the master spirits of all the ages. Anything he wrote is of interest to us, but his last words are doubly so. Bengel calls this epistle "the last will and testament of Paul and his swan song." Calvin said of it: "This epistle seems to have been written not so much with ink as with Paul's own blood. It is the solemn subscription of the Pauline doctrine and faith." What is the last testimony of the veteran of the cross? Many would say that his life work had been a failure. He was in prison and forsaken by all of his friends. Deserted, as the Master was in Gethsemane, does his faith fail him? What does he say? "God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness.[77] I suffer, yet I am not ashamed; for I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day.[78] I suffer hardship unto bonds, as a malefactor; but the word of God is not bound.[79] The firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.[80] I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day.[81] The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen." [82]

There is no slightest suggestion of any failure in faith. His confidence never has been shaken since that day on the road to Damascus. Alone and in prison he is as sure of the living presence of the Saviour as he ever has been. He has lived a life of continuous spiritual triumphing and he will die a victor and receive a crown. There is something of superhuman fortitude about this man. Nothing daunts him.

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[77] 2 Tim. 1. 7.
[78] 2 Tim. 1. 12.
[79] 2 Tim. 2. 9.
[80] 2 Tim. 2. 19.
[81] 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.
[82] 2 Tim. 4. 18.

Nothing can separate him from the love of Christ. He can do all things through Christ who strengthened him. He is more than conqueror through his loving Lord. Tribulation and anguish and persecution and famine and nakedness and peril and the sword have no terrors for him. He fears neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature. He triumphs through faith. He is saved by hope. He is secure in God's love. His peace is not to be disturbed. He has proven in his personal experience the truth of all he has preached. God's grace has sufficed him. He is coming to the end of his course in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

He has some forebodings of evil for the church. He is a little anxious about Timothy. He has no foreboding of evil for himself. He is not at all anxious about his own future. His friends may forsake him; God never will. He may be in a dungeon, but he is going to a mansion. He may be bound, but the word of God is not bound. He may be taken away, but the cause he represents is here to stay. His own continuous conquest is only a prophecy of the final and universal conquest of the Christ in human hearts. What God has done for him he can do and will do for all. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. We could ill spare this epistle with its testimony to the consistent close to the apostle's consistent life. It is just such a closing testimony as we would expect the aged hero of the cross to give.

CHAPTER XIV

A CLOSING WORD

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A CLOSING WORD

We have finished the task which we outlined in the Foreword. We have tried to get a valid and vivid impression of the apostle Paul while we were getting a general view of his literary labors. We have studied each of the thirteen epistles. We have determined as exactly as seemed possible the occasion and date and place of their writing. We have suggested something of the outline and the substance of their content, but all we have said has been intended simply by way of introduction to their further personal and prolonged study. We merely have opened the way to what is worthy of life-long labor. Dr. Peabody, of Harvard, once said: "If I had my life to live over again, I would be willing to devote the solid portion of my days to the study of the Pauline epistles. I should feel that in these alone there is work enough and joy enough for a life-long scholarship." Have we been interested in this preliminary study of Paul and His Epistles? Then let us extend and deepen our interest by continued devotion to them.

In daily reading and meditation it may come to be with us as it was with Chrysostom, who in the beginning of his Homilies on the Epistle to the Romans said: "As I keep hearing the epistles of the blessed Paul read, and that twice every week, and often three or four times, I get roused and warmed with desire at recognizing the voice so dear to me, and seem to fancy him all but present to my sight, and behold him conversing with me. But I grieve and am pained that all people do not know this man, as much as they ought to know him; but some are so far ignorant of him, as not

even to know for certainty the number of his epistles. And this comes not of incapacity but of their not having the wish to be continually conversing with this blessed man. For it is not through any natural readiness or sharpness of wit that even I am acquainted with as much as I do know, if I do know anything, but owing to a continual cleaving to the man, and an earnest affection toward him. For, what belongs to men beloved, they who love them know above all others; because they are interested in them." The better we know Paul the more we will love this doughty little champion of the Christian faith. The more we read these epistles the more fully we will realize his ardor and devotion, his flaming heart and saintly life. The inspiration of his life was to be found in his theology, and his theology is to be found in his epistles. They reflect his life, and his life interprets them. We cannot love them without loving him and we cannot love him without constantly studying them.

In First and Second Thessalonians we studied Paul the preacher and the apocalyptic seer and we came to understand something of the methods of his ministry and the meanings of his prophecy. In First and Second Corinthians we studied Paul the pastor and the apologete, the unparalleled organizer of churches and the undaunted defender of his Christian experience and faith. In the Epistles to the Galatians and to the Romans we studied Paul the protestant against all restrictions of religious liberty in thought and in life and Paul the professor of theology, systematizing for all time to come the doctrines of redemption and salvation from sin. In the Prison Epistles we found a picture of Paul the personal friend of Onesimus and Philemon and the Philippians and the inspired idealist of the identification of the individual Christian with Christ and of Christ with the universal church. In the Pastoral Epistles we rejoiced to find another glimpse of the consistent and confident and cheerful and courageous veteran of the many victorious battlefields, facing now toward his

eternal sainthood in heaven. In our study of these epistles we have been looking for their lesson to their own time and to our time as well. We have found the sign-manual of the apostle who wrote them in each of the thirteen products of his pen. We have found in Paul a genius, human and fallible, but of unequaled good judgment in his day, and we are not surprised that he has wielded an unparalleled influence in the Christian Church even to our own day.

We have not called Paul the church's greatest theologian. That honor belongs to the apostle John. The Pauline influence has dominated the thought and life of the church at large, and it ought to do so until the missionary and evangelistic work of the church is done. Then upon the Pauline basis the Johannine theology will be the supreme influence in the days of the church's edification and consummation in love. We pray for the hastening of that day. If we have been interested in the study of Paul and His Epistles, we shall be interested still more in the study of the personality and the writings of the apostle John, for after the Gospels in our New Testament they alone represent any higher reach of human attainment in holy life and holy inspiration.

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INDEXES

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

Agrapha, 164
Aphrodite Pandemos, 194
Apocalypse, Pauline, 165
Apollos, 201
Arabia, 29-33
Asbury, Bishop, 425
Augustine, 10-12

Barnabas and Paul, 273, 277-278

Celibacy and marriage, 218-220
Church in Corinth, 209-212, 267-268
Church at Philippi, 412-419
Church in Rome, 301-305
Church in Thessalonica, 142-143, 145-146
Church Parties in Corinth, 204-206
Church Unity, 393-395
Collection for saints, 254-256
Colossæ, 354
Comparison; Colossians and Ephesians, 385-386
Conscience, 106
Contrast, Colossians and Ephesians, 386-387; First and Second Corinthians, 229-230; Prison Epistles with Others, 403-405
Corinth, 189-196
Crete and the Cretans, 475-477

Demosthenes and Paul, 97-99
Disregard of Nature, 74-82
Disregard of Rules, 82-91

Epistle to Laodiceans, 381-384

Four Groups of Epistles, 70-71
Friendship, Paul's Genius for, 441-442

Galatia, 271
Galatians, 279-281
Gallio, 198-200
Gamaliel, 24

Hamlet and Paul, 435-436
Heresies at Colossæ, 356-370
Hierapolis, 352-354

Integrity, Epistle to the Romans, 321-327; Second Corinthians, 264-267
Isthmian games, 191, 223-224

Jesus and Paul, 127-135
John and Paul, 373-374, 487
Joy of Paul, 421-426

Laodicea, 351-352
Lost Epistles, 71, 72, 73
Luther, Martin, 12, 13

Meat offered to idols, 203, 220
Metaphors of Paul, architectural, 78; athletic, 79; military, 78, 79; mixed, 83-84

North Galatian theory, 275-279

Onesimus, 333-334, 341-343
Outline, First Corinthians, 217-221; Second Corinthians, 253-257; Ephesians, 396; Galatians, 291-292
Outline, Romans, 315-321; Philippians, 433-446

Paul, Advocate, 115-118; anger of, 49-52; coarseness, 82-83; commission, 28-29; consecration, 58-59; conversion, 26-28; courage, 54-58, 153; Greek environment, 23; health of, 36-38; Hellenist, 91-110; humility, 53; imperialism, 62-64; in Arabia, 29-33; in Syria and Cilicia, 33-34; Jewish descent, 19-22; love of, 48, 155, 441-442; orator, 235-237; Pharisee, 21; physique, 34-36; pioneer, 90; preacher, 151-157; rabbi, 110-115; Roman citizenship, 22-23; saintliness, 59-62, 156; schooling, 24-25; self-assertion, 53-54; sensibility, 47; thorn in the flesh, 38-46; tolerance, 434; trade, 24; use of Scripture, 25, 312
Peculiarities in greetings, 69-70
Philippi, 409-410
Pliny's Letter, 337-339
Prison trilogy, 331-332

Saint Francis, 424
Sayings of Jesus, 164, 183
Second Advent, 168-182
Self-sufficiency, 107
Slander, 230-232
Slanders against Paul, 232-250 251-253, 286-289
Socrates, 424
Sosthenes, 200
South Galatian theory, 272-275

Tarsus, 23
Thessalonica, 139-140, 146
Thucydides and Paul, 95-97
Timothy, 147, 465-469
Titus, 473-475

Uniform outline, 69
Unselfishness of Paul, 154

Vitality of epistles, 10-15
Vocabulary, 109-110

Wesley, John, 13-14, 179, 231-232, 373, 425
Work, gospel of, 182-183

Yoke-fellow, 443

INDEX OF SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Acts 2. 16-20, 176; 13. 9-11, 50; 16. 37, 49; 20. 25, 454-459; 23. 3, 50

Col. 1. 2, 369; 1. 9-11, 358-360; 1. 28, 361-362, 368; 2. 3, 371; 2. 6, 7, 372-375
14. 35, 221; 16. 9, 57

2 Cor. 10. 1, 233-235; 10. 10, 233, 235, 238; 11. 23-33, 261; 12. 7-10, 38; 12. 16, 245-247, 251

Eph. 1. 3-13, 370; 4. 8, 111

Gal. 1. 8, 9, 51; 1. 15, 19; 1. 16, 17, 29; 1. 21, 33; 3. 16, 111; 3. 19, 112; 4. 13, 15, 40; 4. 21-31, 110-111; 5. 11, 51

2 Pet. 3. 15, 16, 118

Phil. 2. 5-11, 426-428; 3. 5, 6, 20-21; 3. 8-16, 438-439; 3. 21, 439-441

Rom. 1. 24-32, 195; 11. 17-24, 80; 13. 13-14, 11

1 Thess. 1. 3, 157-158; 1. 6, 159; 1. 8, 145-146; 1. 10, 181; 4. 11, 159-162; 4. 13-18, 176-177; 4. 15-17, 164; 5. 16-22, 162-163; 5. 23, 163

2 Thess. 2. 10, 183-184; 2. 12, 171-178; 2. 13, 14, 184-185; 3. 7, 8, 10-12, 182-183; 3. 17, 185

2 Tim. 3. 8, 112; 4. 14, 15, 52

Titus 2. 11-14, 477-478; 3. 4-8, 478-479

INDEX OF NAMES

Acts of Paul and Thecla, 35
Adeney, 264, 272, 323, 375, 461
Alexander, 42
Alford, 281, 402, 461, 463, 464
Aratus, 103
Aristotle, 105
Arnold, Matthew, 65, 135, 443
Augustine, 10, 12, 41, 44, 129

Bacon, 272, 323, 397, 431, 461
Barnabas, 226
Bartlet, 272, 431
Bauer, 429
Baur, 96, 225, 335, 397, 403, 428, 443, 461
Beet, 226, 316, 401, 430
Bengel, 196, 339, 376, 401, 421, 481
Bernard, 131, 461
Beyschlag, 264, 430, 461
Boehme, 44
Buell, 73

Calvin, 41, 76, 313, 317, 376, 481
Casaubon, 119
Chambers, 114, 313
Charles, 175, 360
Chrysostom, 41, 192, 313, 401, 463, 480
Cicero, 139
Clarke, 386
Cleanthes, 102
Clemen, 164
Clement of Alexandria, 164, 186, 264, 376, 397, 443, 464
Clement of Rome, 225, 462, 464
Coleridge, 108, 402
Cone, 214, 264, 397
Curtius, 108

Darwin, 81
Davidson, 275, 385, 397, 429, 451, 461
Davies, 259
Deissmann, 135, 257, 314
Dobschütz, 275, 282, 397
Dods, 134, 142, 214, 461
Dwight, 117

Ellicott, 401, 402, 463
Erasmus, 119, 261, 339
Eusebius, 106, 463, 469
Ewald, 44, 125, 164, 323, 339, 397 430, 461, 463

Farrar, 42, 44, 90, 91, 97, 121, 172, 192, 275, 297, 314, 315, 323, 337, 358, 370, 386, 403, 429, 430, 437, 461, 463, 478
Findlay, 71, 222, 258, 275, 308, 386, 398, 401, 430, 452, 461, 463, 464
Fraser, 222
Fox, 44

Gibson, 100
Gilbert, 275, 461
Gerson, 41
Godet, 14, 116, 164, 186, 206, 226, 253, 259, 261, 265, 275, 281, 294, 297, 307, 314, 326, 358, 397, 401, 429, 430, 461, 463
Gore, 104
Grotius, 402

Harnack, 164, 326, 377, 397, 429, 461
Hase, 164
Hausrath, 44, 62, 169, 185, 264, 272, 296, 308, 323, 414, 461
Hermas, 226, 397
Herzog, 45
Hicks, 108
Hilary, 41
Hilgenfeld, 164, 264, 275, 308, 429, 432, 461
Hofmann, 44, 275, 461
Holsten, 44
Holtzmann, 164, 185, 264, 275, 281, 323, 397, 403, 429, 430, 461
Hort, 397, 401, 430, 461
Howson, 42, 80, 275, 397, 461
Huxley, 81
Huxtable, 88

Ignatius, 226, 397, 464
Irenæus, 164, 180, 376, 397, 428, 464

Jerome, 42, 118, 339, 347, 463
John of Antioch, 36
Jowett, 168, 275
Jülicher, 164, 186, 275, 323, 377, 397, 424, 430, 461
Justin Martyr, 106, 185, 376

Kaftan, 135
Kelman, 108
Kennedy, 264, 431
Köster, 99
Knowling, 320, 397, 462
Krenkel, 44
Kypke, 99

Law, 372
Lewin, 42, 103, 104, 463, 479
Lightfoot, 44, 103, 104, 168, 275, 280, 282, 284, 322, 326, 338, 352, 377, 382, 383, 387, 401, 429, 430, 443, 462, 463
Lindsay, 12
Lipsius, 164, 186, 264, 275, 281, 323, 429, 431
Lock, 390, 392, 393, 397, 430, 472
Luther, 12-13, 41, 113, 119, 280, 297, 308, 313, 318, 340, 364, 401

Maclaren, 362, 365, 366
Mansel, 357
Marcion, 321, 346, 376, 384, 400, 428
Maurice, 402
McClymont, 226, 297
McGiffert, 264, 272, 323, 397, 430, 431, 451, 454, 461
Melanchthon, 308, 313
Merivale, 115
Myers, 237, 260, 363
Mohammed, 44
Moffatt, 264, 275, 281, 377, 397, 431, 461
Monod, 402
Morley, 49
Moule, 403, 430
Muratorian Fragment, 164, 186, 264, 346, 376, 397, 428, 463, 464

Nicephorus, 36

Origen, 118, 347, 443

Pascal, 371
Peake, 264, 272, 326, 429, 431, 461
Pfleiderer, 164, 185, 264, 308, 323, 388, 397, 429, 461
Philopatris, 36
Pierson, 402
Plato, 105, 106
Plummer, 225, 462
Plumptre, 43, 345, 462, 463
Polycarp, 186, 397, 428, 464
Pressensé, 120, 164

Ramsay, 42, 101, 108, 272, 289, 297, 326, 430, 462
Renan, 26, 119, 135, 164, 169, 186, 199, 272, 323, 339, 397, 403, 429, 443, 461, 463
Reuss, 120, 164, 186, 281, 323, 401, 429, 431, 457
Robertson, 222, 256, 264, 265, 397
Royce, 131

Sabatier, 117, 164, 186, 265, 272, 290, 323, 335, 339, 401, 429, 461
Saint Bernard, 44, 77
Saint Catherine, 44
Saint Francis, 44, 424
Salmon, 275, 282, 397, 462, 463, 480
Salmond, 391, 401, 403
Sanday, 265, 272, 314, 326, 377, 430, 458, 462
Saphir, 441
Schaff, 44, 120, 125, 390, 462
Schmiedel, 44, 164, 229, 264, 275, 281, 323
Schürer, 46, 275, 323, 429
Seneca, 102, 103, 199
Shaw, 47, 58, 163, 169, 192, 196, 265, 272, 297, 335, 385, 397, 401, 430, 455, 462, 463
Socrates, 44, 424
Stalker, 126
Stanley, 222, 223
Swedenborg, 44

Tertullian, 42, 113, 164, 173, 186, 264, 376, 384
Theodoret, 41
Theophylact, 41
Tholuck, 119, 313
Tyerman, 14

Vincent, 261, 377, 430
Von Soden, 164, 185, 264, 272, 323, 339, 377, 390, 397, 461

Weiss, 186, 265, 275, 290, 323, 377, 388, 397, 401, 429, 430, 455, 462, 464
Weizsäcker, 185, 221, 260, 265, 272, 323, 397, 425, 461
Westcott, 381, 383
Whitefield, 76
Witsius, 402

Zahn, 164, 186, 253, 265, 272, 323, 325, 326, 377, 397, 429, 430, 462, 463, 464
Zöckler, 275

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